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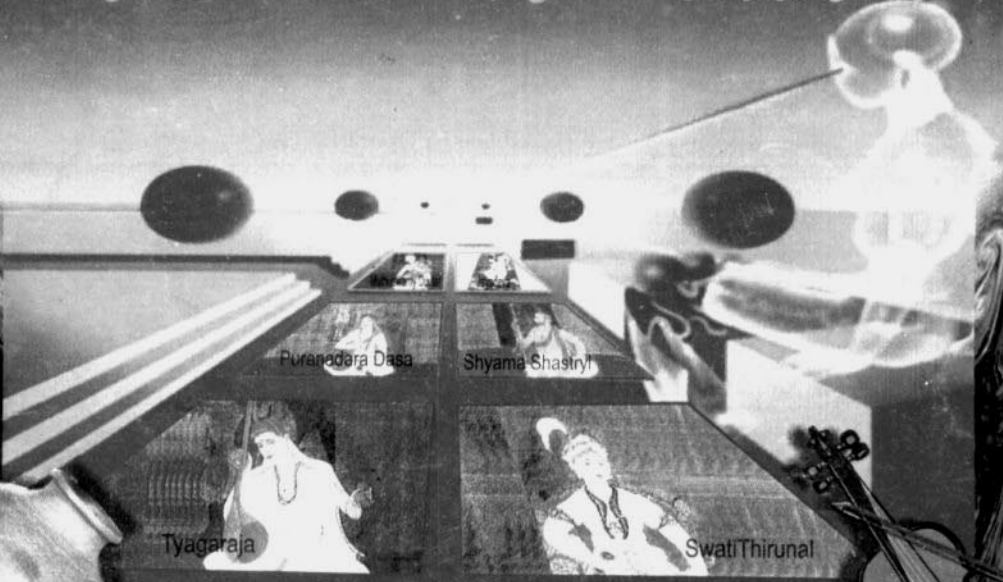
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Journal on Music,
Dance, & Fine Arts



Music's Millenium



Purandara Dasa

Shyama Shastri

Tyagaraja

Swati Thirunal

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PHOENIX

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From the Editor



With the second Millennium nearing its end, a retrospect on the events gone by is a worthwhile proposition. For Phoenix the obvious focus should be on Indian Classical Music, I though inextricably linked with the Indian ethos both the Hindustani and Carnatic variations today enjoy universal appeal. A study of the varied movements that have contributed in this phenomenal evolution should be doubly interesting. Hence this special number.

When the idea was mooted, almost every scholar who was approached not only welcomed the idea, but without hesitation agreed to write on the topic suggested. Cumulatively, they give a glimpse of Indian music in its many splendored glory!

Interestingly, the occasion also proved encouraging from the advertisement angle for the first time. It can be seen that the journal has made headway to almost break even on its resources. All that remains is to see that the tempo is maintained which would ensure a bright future for it.

□ S.N. Chandrasekhar

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Teaching and Learning Music

—Vidwan R.K. Srikantan



R.K. Srikantan

Human mind has always been affected by fine arts, more so by music and dance. These two arts get embellished by expert gurus and their disciples.

Music is the most parochial of arts while it remains at the same time, the most universal. One must be born to a particular musical tradition to savour it fully and claim it as one's own. The music to which one is exposed, grows with him and finds expression in his personality. Indeed, it is part of one's own being and relates to his memories, his emotional make-up and to his deepest urges.

Music is essentially impersonal

Music is essentially impersonal (ವ್ಯಕ್ತಿ ಸ್ವರೂಪವಿಲ್ಲದ್ದು). It

reflects an emotion and an experience which are deeper and wider and older than the emotion or wisdom of any single individual. It is joy without exultation and it is passionate without any loss of serenity (ಪ್ರಶಾಂತತೆ).

*It is joy without exultation
and it is passionate without
any loss of serenity*

Classical Carnatik Music is a product of centuries of musical experimentation and has passed through a process of evolution that has materially altered its shape and structure. Its survival has, by and large, been possible without recourse to writing as a method of preservation until recently. The only method in use was that of oral transmission.

Music cannot be understood entirely through the laws of

*Great music induces rapture
of the body and the mind
and brings tears to the eyes*

physics and its impact is more than physical and biological. It has a profound effect on the psyche and its spiritual value cannot be brushed aside. Great music induces the rapture of the body and the mind and brings tears to the eyes.

Music has been a means in our country for up-ward self-transcendancy. That is why "Nadopasana" has been extolled in our Shastras (ನಾಡೋಪಾಸನ).

It is true that an artiste is born, not made. But unless a gifted artiste or a genius is imbued with high ideals and

*It is true that an artiste is
born, not made*

guided by an expert maestro all his great merits are of little value to the art or tradition. Because neither Sangeeta gnana nor devotion to that art is a matter of plain talk or vain claim, but one of utmost dedication and sustained practice. One's life has to be spent entirely geared up to a rigorous scheme of study, and reorganised in such a manner different from the daily humdrum or dissipation.

In every system or pattern of education we find the relationship of the preceptor and the student, i.e., guru-shishya relationship. This

*All our classical arts have
evolved and developed
through this guru-shishya
parampara*

lineage is still alive in our traditional performing arts like Music, Dance, Drama and Shilpa. All our classical arts

have evolved and developed through this guru-shishya parampara. Nowadays institutional method of training has been followed by many musicians.

Gurukula system

The main purpose of the lineage system of training is to propagate the study of music and other arts in proper perspective and to train generations of artistes and teachers. The crux of musical education lies in teacher-taught rapport and understanding. The task of the teacher in this respect is stupendous and the essence of gurukula system should be provided to the student.

This system advocates one guru, one style and loyalty to that one guru (ಉರುಕುಲಾಸ್ಯ). So it lies with the scions of the hereditary musical families to uphold the gurukula system of

This system advocates one guru, one style and loyalty to that one guru

training. This system of training imparts a high sense of musical discipline to the student. The music he produces bears the hall-mark of that discipline in every syllable of it. Strength and grace go hand in hand. No loose ends are permitted. No chances are taken.

Steely firmness goes into the whole business. The tendency of the student is to essay a new effect only when he is sure of complete success. A judicious restraint prevents

R.K. Srikantan is a celebrated vocalist and was producer of Music in All India Radio, Bangalore. A purist to the core, Srikantan has received prestigious honours like Sangeetha Kalarathna, Sangeetha Kalanidhi.

him from committing excesses. Quality is not sacrificed for

The music he produces bears the hall-mark of that discipline in every syllable of it.

quantity. In this gurukula system, there will be no syllabus, no fixed time-table for learning and practising and no time limit in which a student can be expected to have the high standard desirable in Raga, Kriti, Neraval and Kalpana swara and a capacity for development of originality and individuality. It offers the student an opportunity to spend most of the time with the guru, patiently wait for those occasions which present themselves for learning, practicing, and listening to the music of the guru and try to develop originality and style of presentation.

Teaching and learning of music is a very responsible job that needs complete dedication, application and intuition. The teacher's role is thus as important as his responsibility is onerous. It is teacher's personal example that is the greatest factor in any kind of education. Now times have changed. The gurukula system is no longer

applicable in the present circumstances, and teaching and learning of music is more or less institutional.

The knowledge of music and musical equipment has to be obtained by an earnest student in three ways: one by dedication to the feet of the Master (Guru), i.e., "pranipātena" (ಪ್ರಣಿಪಾತೇನ); second by searching and questions— i.e., "Pāriprash-

Teaching and learning of music is a very responsible job that needs complete dedication, application and intuition

na" (ಪರಿಪ್ರಶ್ನೇನ); and the third by unstinted service to the Master (Guru), i.e., Guru Sevāya (ಉರುಸೇವಾಯ).

But what is ideally desirable is not practically possible. If the Guru were to be a mediocre, all hopes of the student would be frustrated. An ideal Guru should be highly proficient in practical and theoretical aspects of the art. The student should eschew blind imitation and also guard against misguided tramping.

While learning music from the Guru, the student should practise diligently and regularly, cultivate the ability to enjoy the music learnt and

have a researching mind and aptitude to rectify and avoid possible mistakes in swara usage, Raga development and Sahitya content. To expect

An ideal Guru should be highly proficient in practical and theoretical aspects of the art

these qualities in the student, it is necessary that the Guru should have them in full measure and guides the student in all these aspects.

Institutional Training

In modern institutional training, on the other hand, there is a given syllabus, a fixed time table for teaching and learning, a time limit in which a student is expected to learn and develop a certain high standard in Music. In group learning, there is the advantage of a competitive atmosphere, a comparative study of individuals and the creation of an incentive and enthusiasm. Nevertheless, there is the greatest disadvantage of compulsory grouping-together of those

with no musical sense or aptitude, thus placing the Guru under the most arduous and trying test of his life and

In modern institutional training, on the other hand, there is a given syllabus, a fixed time table for teaching and learning, a time limit in which a student is expected to learn and develop a certain high standard in Music

bringing out his sense of dedication, patience, perseverance, understanding, sympathy, capability and discipline. The teacher has to keep a watch over the students' individual receptivity, grasp and capacity to reproduce and correct them then and there.

Revision of what has been taught is very necessary. Ours is an age of mass education. The west today dominates the world in every aspect. All of us want to win its admiration because we want to be self-assured in our present sorry predicament. Times have changed and we are facing

different challenges. People are always tense and in a tearing hurry.

Is our music seriously taken by our young people? Are they aware of the values on which it is based and do they question their validity? These are questions relevant to the future of our music. It is the taste for listening to good music, perseverance for personal expression, diligent sadhana and discriminating presentation—these to be instilled in the present-day students who are exposed to diverse interests with general education claiming their foremost attention. And however much music may be learnt from academic institutions and other teachers, an artiste must be born with that divine spark that makes the difference between talent and genius. A profound and unconditional love for the subject is very very necessary. God has endowed us with all the faculties we need to study well and do wonderful things we must strive to personify the study of the subject. □



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Classical Music and Royal Courts

—Prof. S.K. Ramachandra Rao

It is usual for rulers, all over the world, at any rate from the Middle Ages, to encourage music by way of patronizing musicians who condescend to attend their courts. This they do in the hope that the musicians will thereby produce their best, and thereby bring credit to the courts; the rulers will be immortalized if the musicians they encourage are exceptionally brilliant, and this is the underlying hope when they patronize musicians. It is not as if the rulers care very much for music as such, or for the musicians themselves. So when we turn our attention to the question of royal patronage to classical music in South

India, we have to keep in mind this general background.

It is on record that classical music flourished in the erstwhile royal courts of Tanjore, Travancore and Mysore, besides the minor principalities like Ramnad, Ettayapuram, Bobbili and Gadwal. It is also well-known that the very idiom of classical

the very idiom of classical music was formed and finalized, in close association with royal courts

music was formed and finalized, in close association with royal courts. *Sangita-ratnaakara*, the first great

definitive text, was prepared by a minister in the court of Singhana of Devagiri (1210–1247). A commentary on this work was written by a ruler himself, Singa-bhuupaala (1330). Another well-known gloss *Sangita-kalaanidhi* was authored by Kallinatha (Kallappa), who was in the court of Devaraya II. It was his grandson Ramaamaathya, who adorned the court of the Vijayanagar monarch Aliya Rama-raya that wrote *Svaramelakalanidhi* (1550), the impact of which work on South Indian music, has been profound. And his descendent was the author of the celebrated *Chaturdandi-prakaasika*. *Sangita-Sudhaa* was composed by Govinda-Dikshita, who was a minister of the Tanjore ruler Raghunatha Nayaka (1614–1640). Vidyaranya, who in a way finalized the Karnataka music idiom was associated with the Vijayanagar Court. Tulajaji (1729–1735) a ruler of Tanjore, was himself the author of *Sangita-Saaraamrta*. *Sangraha-chuudaamani's* author Akalanka Govinda-charya was the chief astrologer to the Tanjore court. *Sangita-sampradaya pradarsini* of Subbarama Dikshitar (1839–1904) was prepared at the instance of the ruler of Ettayapuram. These are the works which have rendered music in South India classical.



Prof. S.K. Ramachandra Rao releasing the Inaugural Edition of Phoenix

That the authors of these works, which set high standards in South Indian music, were connected with royal courts was but an accident; they were certainly not products of royal interest or enthusiasm. Even when the authors were rulers themselves, like Tulajaji (author of *Sangitasaramrta*) or

However, it is true that many rulers have been keenly or unusually interested in musicians and their performances; but it cannot be said that their interest was in music as such

Jagadeka-malla (author of *Sangita-chudaamani*; a Kalyani Chalukya King 1138–1150), their competence in music was a sheer accident; it was by no means incidental to the royalty. However, it is true that many rulers have been keenly or unusually interested in musicians and their performances; but it cannot be said that their interest was in music as such. Even the interest in musicians was not solely in exceptional merit as musicians themselves; it was

it was often motivated by an urge to enhance the prestige of their own courts

often motivated by an urge to enhance the prestige of their own courts. The rulers of Tanjore, Travancore or Mysore made efforts to get the great Tyagaraja to their audience (but in vain), so that they themselves become celebrated

thereby. Who would have heard of Ettayapuram, had not Muttuswami Dikshitar visited it to adorn the court of the petty ruler?



Shyama Sastry

It is hard to imagine a musical talent that flowered all by itself in any royal court. It is only when the talents of a musician have been recognized widely that it occurs to the ruler or his counsellor to invite and honour him in the royal court. Some musicians, notwithstanding their talent, feel flattered; some condescend to accept the invitation; but there are musicians who have turned down these honours. It

It is only when the talents of a musician have been recognized widely that it occurs to the ruler or his counsellor to invite and honour him in the royal court

is not only Tyagaraja (1767–1847) who declined to visit the courts of rulers. Syama Sastry (1762–1827) rejected the invitation of the then Maharaja of Mysore, Krishnaraja Wodeyar III, who had specially sent Appu-kutti Natuvan, one of the most proficient musicians of the day to bring him. A little-known but prolific composer, Cheyyur Chengalva-rayasastry (1810–1900, also rejected the pressing invitation of many a ruler.

Syama Sastry (1762–1827) rejected the invitation of the then Maharaja of Mysore

Composer of more than a thousand musical pieces, he dedicated 300 of them to Kamakshi of Kanchi, 240 to Meenakshi of Madurai and about a 100 to Venkateshwara of Tirupati; and none to any human being. Similarly Pedda-dasari, a renowned musician

Prof. S.K. Ramachandra Rao is a multifaceted personality who speaks with authority on several topics. Rao has authored many textual treatises on different topics and has received several titles, like Sangeetha Vidyaalankara and Sangeetha Kalaarathna.

and composer, refused to eulogize the ruler who offered him patronage Vijayaraghava-Nayaka (1633–1673). He was a devotee of Narasimha (of Simhachalam) and how could he supplicate an 'uru-simha' (the lion of the small town, viz., the dog)?

There is an interesting story of an eminent and saintly composer Annaavadhuta of Savanur. His compositions in Sanskrit and Kannada were popular in musical circles and devotional groups. He was too independent and high-spirited to sing before rulers and rich folk. The Dewan of the state was therefore surprised when this august musician asked him to persuade the Nawab to listen to his music. When the Nawab did listen to his music, he was so highly pleased that he honoured him with a thousand gold coins. The musician distributed what he had received to the people outside the palace; before going home. He composed a song which told the Nawab how sunk he was in unwarranted arrogance. Music was meant to uplift the soul, and not to gather trinkets. His song was designed to correct the Nawab and improve him as a person; instead of learning, the Nawab had been pleased with himself!

There are other musicians, of undoubted excellence and popularity, who have scorned royal patronage. Aruna-giri-nathar (15th century), Arunachala-Kavirayar (1611–1788), Sridhara-ayyaavaal and Bodhendra-sadguru (18th century) and Tallapakam

Annamacharya (1424–1503) are among them. Margadarsi Sesha Ayyangar (17th century) the composer whom Swati Tirunal (1813–1847) took as his model, was averse to singing before chieftains and rulers. His '*Rukminisa maam palaya*' in the raga *Athana* is a marvel to this day. He composed his songs, in hundreds, and placed them at the feet of Ranganatha, who was his tutelary deity, in Srirangam. After a while, all the papers on which the songs were written down lay scattered all over the place; barring the manuscripts containing but sixty of his songs. He preserved only these sixty songs as accepted by the Lord, and destroyed the others as worthless.

And there are musicians who have remained indifferent to the royal patronage they have received. Kshetrayya, for instance, was honoured by the rulers of Madurai, Tanjore and Golkonda; but his four thousand padas were ascribed only to his chosen deity, Gopala of Muvva. Aananda-daasa (Kamalesa-vitthala) of Surapura, prolific and profound composer in Kannada, was honoured by the rulers of Surapura, Kolhapura, Mysore, Gadwal, Vanaparti and Domakonti. But he ignored them altogether in his compositions. He is the author of many javalis (to suit dance), dandakas, padas and kirtanas. His '*Kandu dhanyanadeno Udipi Krishnana*' (in Behag) is a famous piece. In this group must be included Meru-swami,



Swati Tirunal

who was honoured by Swati Tirunal (1813–1847), the ruler of Travancore. He had been similarly honoured by the rulers of Tanjore, Sarabhoji and Sivaji. He may be said to have inaugurated the Harikatha-Kalakshepa idiom in the South. Although patronized by rulers, he was supremely indifferent to his patrons. In the more remote part, the famous composer of *Gita-govinda* of undying celebrity, Jayadeva was in the court of Ballala-Lakshmana Sena (1170–1200), whom however he has not cared to immortalize; he thought it fit to immortalize his own wife Padmavati.

*Jayadeva thought it fit
to immortalize his own wife
Padmavati*

Those who have succumbed to the royal pressures and yielded to the lures of the court are indeed in very large

numbers; there are musicians who have even sought them out. Among them were many gifted souls who brought great distinction to the courts they belonged to. This was especially the case with the Tanjore royal court. Generations of Tanjore rulers were themselves able composers and extremely knowledgeable in music and dance. The musicians they patronized were acknowledged masters. There was an undoubted spurt in creative music, and during those days talent was indeed abundant. The rulers were keen on encouraging music as such along with the musicians. They were an exception to the rule we have mentioed earlier.

In the Tanjore court, numerous musical forms, moulds and varieties developed within the classical framework : like krti, pada-varna, tana-varna, javali, svara-jati, jati-svara, gita, prabandha, tenaka, taranga, laavani, laali, unjal and so on. There were also compositions in hundreds, in Sanskrit, Telugu and Tamil. The royal patronage was responsible for the high standard that classical music reached, and the large number of compositions of different types. There was also a stylization that neared perfection.

While musicians and composers vied with each other in the field of compositions suited for public performances and royal audience, *manodharma-sangita* suffered greatly. Creativity in pure

While musicians and composers vied with each other in the field of compositions suited for public performances and royal audience, manodharma-sangita suffered greatly

musical representation became increasingly neglected. For this did not depend on royal patronage but on the individual genius. And it is hard for a genius to accommodate himself within the capricious confines of a court and to cater to the vagaries of patrons. Tyagaraja and Syama Sastri could contribute more substantially to music than all the hundreds of court musicians in Tanjore. It may also be noted that the most magnificent compositions of Muttuswami Dikshitar belong to the period prior to his

it is hard for a genius to accommodate himself within the capricious confines of a court and to cater to the vagaries of patrons

joining the court of Ettayapuram (1835).

The royal court at Mysore was but a faint copy of that of Tanjore. The patronage-tradition was in a sense a continuation from where Tanjore ceased to steal the show. The royal patronage in Mysore really began with Krishnaraja Wodeyar III (1799-1868). By that time the royal family of Tanjore had become a spent force; and the

musical gravity had shifted to Madras (Chennai). The Mysore Maharaja rehabilitated the musicians and dance-masters from Tanjore. Among them were Veena Kuppayya, his son Veena Bhakshi Venkatasubbayya, Sambayya, Chikkaramappa, Lalgudi Rama Iyer, Sadasiva-rayar and

The royal patronage in Mysore really began with Krishnaraja Wodeyar III

Pacchimiriyaam Adappayya's son Krishnayya.

These were no doubt eminent masters, and some of them excellent composers. Mysore continued its patronage to musicians during

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*The last Maharaja was
Jayachamaraja Wodeyar
(1940–1974)*

the reigns of Chamaraja Wodeyar (1868–1894) and Krishnaraja Wodeyar IV (1895–1940). Among the masters of this period were Veena Sheshanna, Veena Subbanna, Chikkarama Rao, Venkatagiriappa, Bidaram Krishnappa, Muttaya-Bhagavata, T. Chowdayya and Vasudevacharya. They were also composers, and their compositions followed the mould set in Tanjore. The last Maharaja was Jayachamaraja Wodeyar (1940–1974), who was no doubt greatly interested in music. He was himself a

*was himself a composer,
following the style of
Muttuswami Dikshitar in his
96 compositions*

composer, following the style of Muttuswami Dikshitar in his 96 compositions.

Swati-Tirunal (1813–1847) was probably the only Indian ruler who dedicated himself entirely to music. He was a patron in the real sense of the

*Swati-Tirunal (1813–1847)
was probably the only
Indian ruler who dedicated
himself entirely to music*

term. Himself a composer of outstanding merit, he encouraged art music, besides patronizing competent musicians. In his court were many masters with a flair for creativity. Among them was



Jayadeva

Irayimman Tampi (1783–1858), whose compositions (tana-varnas, pada-varnas, padas, Navaratri-prabandham and Kathakkali-pieces) are exquisite art-forms. Although Swati-Tirunal himself was a prolific composer, he did not neglect the manodharma aspect of music. In this, he is in the august company of Tyagaraja and Syama-Sastri.

Another royal court with a special predilection for classical musicians was Ramnad with its rulers Bhaskara-Setupathi and Ramalinga-Setupathi. The rulers no doubt honoured numerous musicians, but the one master who stands out conspicuously was Kunrakkudi Krishna Ayyar (1816–1889), whose varna in Kambhoji (on Ramalinga Setupathi) and varnas in Chowka-kala (on Bhaskara-Setupathi) are monumental compositions.

Music appears to have

*Music appears to have
developed and fulfilled its
function in human society,
altogether independent of
royal patronage*

developed and fulfilled its function in human society, altogether independent of royal patronage. This is not to disparage the role of royal appreciation, but to emphasize that the history of classical music in South India abounds in the contributions made by

*All patronage has the
flavour of petty politics, and
this can easily weaken the
commitment to music,
especially to the devotional
element, in it*

talented masters who preferred not to be obligated by royal personages and their condescending officers. Getting honoured in royal courts is one thing; but to cling to a royal court for livelihood and recognition of musical merit is another. It seems to me that Veena Sheshanna would have shone more brilliantly, had he not clung to the royalty in Mysore. Many talents have withered in Mysore, owing to the patronage extended by rulers and their unscrupulous henchmen. All patronage has the flavour of petty politics, and this can easily weaken the commitment to music, especially to the devotional element, in it, which all along has characterized South Indian music. Servility and Sycho-phancy befit ill creative music.

Dhruvapada or Dhrupada

—Dr. M.R. Gautham



Dr. M.R. Gautham

A critical study of the history of Indian music will reveal the fact that our music has evolved independently in three different sectors, namely, the melodic, the rhythmic and structural or compositional, comprising the *raga*, *tala* and *prabandha*.

While *raga* and *tala* are unique in their concept and construction in the world, even in composition, nowhere else, in the world of music, has there been such bewildering mind-boggling sophistication and intricacies of structure as in the *Prabandha* of Indian music. Also like *raga* and *tala* which have evolved through centuries and have got modified considerably from their original form, similarly on the compositional side, *prabandha* has also undergone cataclysmic changes in the preceding centuries. This

again appears to me as another extraordinary phenomenon because in Western classical music, the composition like the symphony, sonata, rhondo, fugue, etc., there has been no perceptible structural changes as in Indian music.

Among the vast varieties of the *Prabandha*, there was only one variation called the *Salagasuuda* (सालगसूड) in which the segment known as *antara* (अन्तर) occurred¹. Sarngadeva, the author of the famous magnificent work on music on Indian music clarifies this as follows:—

There occurs a *dhaatu* known as *antara* between *dhruva* and *Aabhoga*. This *dhaatu* is found to occur only in "*Salagasuuda prabandha*". Hence the following *dhaatus* or segments constitute the *Salagasuuda prabandha*:

1. *Udgraha*, 2. *Dhruva*, 3. *Antara*, 4. *Aabhoga*.

Salagasuuda prabandha had seven varieties namely (1) *Dhruva* (ध्रुव), (2) *Mantha* (मण्ड) (3) *Pratipantha* (प्रतिपण्ड), (4) *Nihsaruka* (निःसारुक), (5) *Addataala* (अडुताल), (6) *Raasa* (रस) and (7) *Ektaali* (एकताली).

To give an idea of the bewildering complexities of the above *prabandha*, I think it would suffice to state that the first variety *dhruva* had

sixteen sub-varieties; each had a different name; different number of *aksharas* (अक्षर), different *talas* and each was rendered in a distinct, characteristic way!

The transition from *prabandha* to *dhrupada* began in the latter half of the 13th Cent., A.D. One of the earliest *dhrupadas* of this period is by Nayak Gopal who was taken captive to Delhi by Allauddin Khilji. It reveals this transition. It is in *raaga Bhimpalasi* in *sulfaakta* (सुलफाक्ता) *tala*. This composition was found in the very valuable manuscript *Raagamaala* and belonged to Pandit Ayodhya Prasad Pathak, the renowned Pakhawaj player of Rampur. The composition contains only three segments. The last segment is in praise of the king and has the author's signature. The other two are *udgraaha* and *antara*.

The other works which contain considerable valuable information are *Maana-kutuuhal* by Raja Man Singh Tomar, the king of Gwalior and *Raagdarpan* by Faqirulla. Faqirulla was an army commander under Auran-gzeb. He translated *Maana-kutuuhal* into persian and has given in addition very interesting information about *raaga*, *taala* and composition. He is emphatic in asserting

1. *Sangita Ratnakara*, Vol II, Adyar Edn., 1943, p. 335.

that Raja Man Singh Tomar was the originator of the *dhrupada*.

In a way he is correct because it was Raja Man Singh Tomar who, by organising a conference of *Nayakas* and scholars succeeded in evolving a proper structure and a systematic style. He was also responsible for its full consummation and development. He had several great musicians in his court like Nayak Baiju (Baiju Bavra), Nayak Bakshu (बक्षु) and Nayak Pandaviya. (पाण्डवीय) Because of the presence of these people, he was able to achieve the above objective and establish *dhrupada* as the primary form of classical music. The honorific prefix *Nayaka* was conferred only on those who were expert musicians, musicologists and composers. A mere good singer was known as *gayaka*.

The *dhrupada* that was an evolve from the *Eklali prabandha*, one of the varieties of the *Salagasuda* the group consisted of four segments namely *udgraaha*, *antara*, *sancaari* and *Aabhoga*. Later *udgraaha* was changed to *sthaayi*. But later on modifications into the structure of the *dhrupada* occurred.

Nawab Adil Shah of Bijapur

was a great patron of the *dhrupada* and was himself an accomplished composer. But his compositions contained only three segments namely *sthaayi*, *antara* and *Aabhoga*, omitting *sancaari*. His compositions which were in manuscript form were published in the form of a book by the Sangeet Natak Akademi called '*Kitab-e-Navras*'. But the three segment *dhrupada* did not develop much and get the patronage of the musicians.

Some *dhrupadas* contain only two segments namely *Sthaayi* and *antara* omitting *sancari* and *Aabhoga*. This variety is the one which is most well known and sung today.

THE DHRUPADA STYLE

Basically this style is akin to that of carnatic music because of the dichotomization of *raagaalapa* and the *taala* variations. Before the composition is sung, the *aalapa* of the *raaga* is done elaborately and systematically. This is in fact, the modernised version of the old *raagaalapti* described in the *Sangita Ratnakara*.

The first stage of the *aalapa* began from the third *svara* of the *madhyasaptaka* (middle octave) and went as far down in the *mandrasthana* or lower octave as was possible

for the singer, employing all the various requisite *gamakas*. Then from there, the singer slowly traces back his path to the starting note. This was called *prathama swasthaana*. (प्रथम स्वस्थान) The second stage is when the singer starts from the fourth note of the *madhyasthaana*, (मध्यस्थान) takes a few notes above and again traverses the notes of the *mandrasthaana* (मन्दिर स्थान) and comes to the starting note, i.e., the fourth of the middle octave.

This is known as the *dvitiyasvasthaana*, (द्वितीय स्वस्थान). In the third or *trtiyasvasthana*, (तृतीय स्वस्थान) the *alapa* begins from the fifth *svara* or note of the middle octave and moves upto the seventh note, of the middle after detailed delineation in that octave. The fourth or *caturthsvasthaana* (चतुर्थ स्वस्थान) occurs when the *alapa* touches the *taarasthaana* (तारस्थान) and also covers the *madhya* and *mandra sthaanaas* (middle and lower octaves) and then ends on the starting third note of the *madhyasthaana*. In practice, even now the four stages of *aalapa* are adhered to albeit not so rigidly and they are called *sthaayi*, (स्थायी) *antara*, (अन्तर) *sancaari* (संचारी) and *aabhoga*. (आभोग)

In the *alapa* the syllables *re*, *te*, *ne*, *nom*, *tom*, *tana*, *nana*, etc., are used which have no particular connotation. It is now-a-days known by the name *nom-tom*. It must be said that the *alapa* is the acid test of the creative capacity of the singer, because it is entirely improvisation and therefore

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demands a thorough understanding of the ethos of the *raga*, its melodic contours, and a judicious use of all the appropriate *gamakas*. For *aalapa* to be impressive and expressive, a pliable, melodious voice is essential. All the aesthetically expressive devices like *aalapa* on *vaadi*, *samvaadi*, *alpatva* (conscious mitigation) and *bahutva* (conscious abundance), *aavirbhaava* (manifestation) and *tirobhaava* (concealment) are skillfully employed by the singer to beautifully portray the scope of the *raga*.

The tempo of the *aalapa* has also three ostages—*vilambita* (slow), *madhya* (medium) and *druta* (fast). As already clarified, till the *aalapa* ends, and the composition begins, the *pakhawaj* player does nothing except strike the *pakhawaj* whenever the singer returns to the starting note. The variations—both melodic and rhythmic—with the text of the *dhrupada* are also done in stages, in the *puuruvaanga* (lower tetracord) and *uttaraanga* (upper tetracord). Also the contours of the four segments of the *dhrupadas* namely *sthaayi*, *antara*, *sancaari* and *aabhoga* are followed by the singer in the *bol-upaj* (textual variations). The *sthaayi* ranges from the lower *pancama* (पञ्चम) to the *taara-sadja*. The *antara* covers the range from the *pancama* of the middle octave upto the third or fourth note in the upper octave. The *sancaari* is a deviation from the melodic

lines of both the *sthaayi* and the *antara*. It explores a new path and usually remains within the middle octave. The *aabhoga* moves into the *taarasthaana* (upper octave) and sometimes goes upto the *pancama* and concludes with a beautiful sweep, manifesting all the aesthetically attractive spots of the *raga*.



Ustad Alla Bande Khan

In the rhythmic elaboration, latitude is allowed to the singer to deviate from the rigid structure of the composition. Sometimes the composition (*dhrupada*) is rendered in double, treble and quadruple tempo. (द्विगुण, त्रिगुण, चोगुण) This is a very attractive aspect of the *dhrupada gaayaki*, especially if there is an understanding & capable *pakhawaj* accompaniment. But if done in excess and at the expense of tunefulness, then it tends to jar. Whatever is done, beauty of tone and articulation must not be sacrificed. Baij Bavra, Tansen and others, are still remembered because they must have been great masters of this art.

In this century, the great

dhrupada exponents belonged to two *gharaanaas* or schools. One is the *Mallick gharaana* and the other is the *Dagar gharaana*. Both *gharaanaas* produced great masters. The last of the great exponents of the *Mallick gharaana* was Pandit Ramachatur Mullick. In the *Dagar gharaana*, beginning from Ustad Behram Khan there were several great singers like Ustads Alla Bande Khan, Zakruddin Khan, Nasiruddin Khan, Ziauddin Khan, Rahimuddin Khan, Tansen Pande, Moinudin Khan, Aminuddin Khan and others.

But about sixty-seventy years ago, the late Ustad Faiyaz Khan of Baroda began an *aalapa* before singing either a *dharmar* or *khayal*. This was quite different from the well-known *dhrupada aalapa* as he used many of the embellishments of the *khayal gaayaki*; like *khatka*, (खटका) *gitkiri* (गिटकिरी), *aahata* (आहत) and a peculiar, characteristic reverse *meenda* (उल्टा मीढ़) which are taboo in the *dhrupada gaayaki*. But this caught on and almost all the ustads and singers of the Agra *gharaana* regularly began doing an *aalapa* before singing the *khayal*.

FADE OUT OF THE DHRUPADA.

What is surprising is why the *dhrupada gayaki* or style, with its exquisite textual literature, beautiful compositions, and aesthetically filled, meditative *alapas* gradually went out of vogue and allowed itself to be displaced by the

khayal. In my understanding the reasons are:

1. It is an empirical fact that in music, the emphasis on rhythm is inversely proportionate to the evolution of melody. In the case of the *dhrupada*, the unnecessary, undue stress on *taala* and *layakaari* in the last four to five decades, inevitably led to the disregard of the *aalapa* and also to the neglect of the beauty of the composition. This resulted in the extenuation of the two most attractive aspects of the style. After all, the pandemonious dialogue between the singer and the *pakhawaj* accompanist can be interesting and tolerable for sometime. But if the process of *layakaari* involves the casualty of melody and tunefulness, then it will tantamount to cacophony. Unfortunately these days the *bol-upaj* and *layakaari* that one hears, are more an obstreperous dissonance than mellifluous music.

2. The rigidity of the rules of rendition of *aalapa* wherein only a select number of *gamakas* were allowed and the mechanical enunciation of the composition were also a cause for the decline of popularity of the *dhrupada*. In other words, it was the unbending classicity in the context of the emergence of the *khayal*.


3. The *khayal* was a classico-romantic form, modelled on the *ruupakaalapti* imbibing the serenity and classicity of the *dhrupada* on the one hand and the lyrical allure of the *thumri* and also the intellectuality and

virtuosity of the *tappa*. In the *khayal*, the *aalapa* or elaboration of the *raga* is done to the accompaniment of the *tabla*, the percussion or *taala* instrument, employing the words of the *khayal* whenever necessary to augment the theme of the composition through the appropriate phrasing of the *svaras*. Here the *khayal* would come very close to the *thumari*. The *khayal* also uses many more *gamakas* than the *dhrupada*. Since the *taala* section is delegated to the separate *tabla* accompanist who keeps the *thekha* or the mnemonic pattern of the *taala* constantly, the *khayal* singer experiences much greater freedom for improvisation both

of the *raaga* and the *taala*. There is more variety in the systematic development of the *khayal* like *badhat*, *firat*, *upaj*, *layakaari*, *bol-taana* and *taana* and last but not least, the inevitable *Sargam*. When *zam-zama taanaa* are taken, then the *tappa anga* also steps in. Thus the *khayal* style is more composite, comprehensive than the *dhrupada*.

Nevertheless, it is my feeling that if the *dhrupada* exponents will pay more attention to tunefulness (*soor*) and sweetness (*mitaz*) and progressively reduce the emphasis on *layakaari*, this wonderful authentic style can definitely be resuscitated.



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The Trinity of Tamil Music

—Tanjavur B.M. Sundaram



Long before the times of the Carnatic Music Trinity, there was another trinity, so to say, and they were Muthu Tandavar, Tillaividangan Marimutha Pillai and Seerkazhi Arunachala Kavirayar.

Tandavan (original name of Muthu Tandavar) belonged to the Isaivelala community and hailed from Seerkazhi, a town near Chidambaram. Re-searchers say that he used to play during the daily rituals at the temple and soon discontinued his service since he was affected by leprosy (some aver it was only active stomach ache).

There was a dancer by name, Sivabhagam, in the same place, who was a good singer too. Tandavan used to spend his time at her doorsteps listening to her sweet music. The lady's family and that of

Tandavan had some enmity, long back and both severed all connections between them. Naturally, Tandavan's parents didn't relish his going to the enemy's house. In spite of repeated rebukes, Tandavan continued in his own way and his parents had to neck him out one day.

Starving for about two days, he entered the temple precincts and lay down in the enclosure, where the deity's chariots were stationed. Excess of hunger drove him to sleep. At about midnight he was woken up by a young girl, who served him delicious and sumptuous food.

He found it was the daughter of the temple priest. The girl questioned why he sobbed. He said that his hunger had been quenched but his worry was about his disease. She suggested that he go to Chidambaram and sing in praise of the Lord.

Tandavan submitted that he didn't know either to sing or to compose. The girl advised him, "Don't worry! Take the very first word you hear in the shrine of lord Nataraja and start to sing. You can do it" and then disappeared.

Tandavan, when found out the next morning by the temple authorities, revealed the whole story. Everyone realised that she was none other than the goddess, that appeared in the

form of the priest's daughter and praised him as "Muthu Tandavan" and from then on, this name stuck to him.

Muthu Tandavar proceeded to Chidambaram and there the first words that reached his ears was "Bhooloka Kailasam" and immediately emerged from him the first composition, "Bhooloka Kailasagiri Chidambaram". He found five gold coins at the doorsteps of the shrine, a gift by the Lord Himself. It became his custom to compose a song, taking cue from the first word uttered in the shrine.

One day, nobody spoke and Muthu Tandavar's composition, 'Pesadiru Nenjame' took birth. It was only Muthu Tandavar who composed Tamil padams and many are of the view that he was the first author to compose padams. He was much older than Kshetraraya 'Teruvil Varano' (Khames), Muthu Tandavar's padam is very popular. 'Sevikka Vendum' (Andholika), Adikkondar (Mohanam) and many others are his keertanas. He might have composed at least a few hundreds but we have now got only 60 keertanas and 25 padams. He like Nandanar and Manikkavachakar, merged with Lord Nataraja, in the presence of many devotees. He lived between 1560 and 1640 A.D.

Tillaividangan is a hamlet, about ten kilometres away from Chidambaram. Deivangal Perumal Pillai of the Saiva Velala community lived there. He was a pious devotee of Lord Siva. **Marimutha Pillai** was born to him in 1712 A.D. Even at an young age, Marimutha Pillai became a scholar in Tamil and took pleasure in composing Tamil poems. His wife was Marimuthu Ammal and the couple got three sons: Deivangal Perumal (Junior), Subbarayan and Kumaraswami. The eldest son was quite adept in Tamil, even before he attained his tenth year.

At the age of twelve, this son composed 'Umadevi Malai' and had the vision of the goddess which made him somewhat insane. Worried over this, Marimutha Pillai came to Chidambaram with his son. It is said that Lord Nataraja appeared in Pillai's dream and asked him to compose poems in praise of Chidambaram and Lord Nataraja. Pillai authored 'Puliyar Venba' and his son's insanity vanished and he regained normalcy.

Marimutha Pillai, during his trip to Chennai, met Manali Chinnayya Mudaliar, a patron of letters (who patronised Ramaswami Dikshitar). Observing the prowess of Marimutha Pillai, Mudaliar presented him one hundred gold coins.

Pillai has composed on Sarasvati and Ayyappa, having abode in his native village, a Kuravanji on Lord Siva called

B.M. Sundaram is a noted musicologist, having authored reference compendiums like **PALAI AZHI** covering more than 3000 ragas, his **TAALA SANGRAH** covering over 1200 Taalas. Sundaram has received several titles like Sangeetha Saastra Kovida, Kala Bharati.

'Varunapuri Adimooleesar Kuravanji', some songs on Lord Govindaraja, lying very near Lord Nataraja. Most of Pillai's compositions are on Nataraja and in the form of 'Nindastuti'. 'Veendam Ambalamagi', 'Enna Pichaippu', 'Ummaippol Attedettu' and such others are there as 'Nindastuti'. 'Kalaitookinindu' Yadukula-kambhoji), 'Onukal Sivachidambaram' (Arabhi), 'Edukkittanai modi' (Surati) and some others were the favourites of dancers of yesteryears.

Chidambaram and its suburbs were under the rule of a petty chief, called Khansahib and the ruler was a pious one and charity minded. Later the rule was usurped by one Sivachidambaram who tyrannised his subjects by heavy taxation, punishments and so on. Marimutha Pillai composed a farce with the title 'Aneeti Natakam', and exactly eight days after its premiere, Sivachidambaram left this world.

Marimutha Pillai's compositions are also in hundreds. Only about one hundred have been published. The rest are in manuscripts, well preserved by his descendants. Marimutha Pillai passed away in 1787 A.D.

Ramayana, the epic is a great contribution of Sage Valmiki, in Sanskrit. Poet Kamban gave it in Tamil. Arunachala Kavirayar of Seerkazhi, acquired an indelible name in the annals of Tamil composers, by his 'Rama Nataka Keertanaigal'.

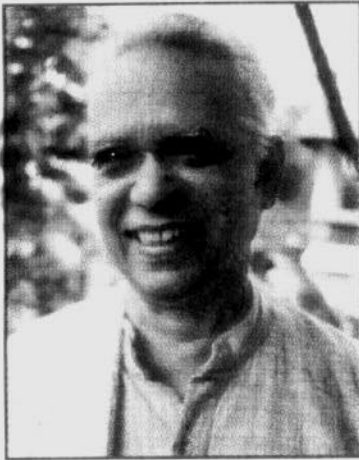
Arunachalam was born in the village Tillayadi, near Mayiladuturai, as the son of Nallatambi Pillai. This village is the birthplace also of Valli Ammal, a devotee of Gandhiji and a martyr in South Africa. Arunachalam lost his parents when he was only twelve. He proceeded to Dharmapuram Mutt and came under the care of the pontiff. There he obtained mastery both in Tamil and Telugu. Also he was adept in Saiva Siddhanta and so the pontiff desired to name him as his successor. But Arunachalam declined saying that he wished only to be a 'gruhasta'. He returned to Tillayadi got married (at the age of 35) and started a small jewellery shop for his livelihood. Among all other works 'Tirukkural' and 'Kamba Ramayana' were his two 'eyes'.

During a business trip to Pondicherry, Arunachalam stayed in Seerkazhi with his one time classmate,

(Contd. on P. 45)

Devotional Music

—Prof. N. Krishnaswamy



Prof. N. Krishnaswamy

Gorakh Nath, the famous disciple of Machinder Nath, may be the first composer of devotional songs in this, the second millennium. It is doubtful, if there were any devotional songs before that time. No doubt, there were compositions of the sloka, or vachana type, but it is not common to come across songs, of the pada or kriti type earlier.

Gorakh Nath is a mystical, mythical figure, but two facts help us in establishing his time. The founder of the Nath school is, appropriately named Adinath, as indicated by the following abhanga, which is ascribed to Saint Jnaneshwar:

*Adinath gurua
sakalsiddhaancha,
Macchindra tayaancha
mukhya sishya*

*Macchindraane bodh
Gorakshasi kela
Goraksha volala
Gayaniprati
Gayani prasaadey
Nivrutti daataar
Jnana Deva saar bojavilay.*

This song traces the Nath tradition thus—Adinath—Macchindra Nath—Gorakh Nath—Gayani Nath—Nivrutti Nath—Jnaneshwar (or Jnana Deva).

The history of Jnaneshwar and Nivrutti Nath are well-established. They were born in 1275 A.D. and 1273 A.D. respectively. They lived short lives, Jnaneshwar entered his samadhi in 1296 when he was 21. Within months, his brothers and sisters, Nivrutti Nath, Sopan Dev and Mukta Bai died.

The age of Gayani Nath may be put back by a few decades and of his Guru Gorakh, further by a few decades, so that Gorakh would belong to the 10th or 11th century A.D.

In his booklet on "A Pilgrim Guide" to some places in Dakshina Kannada and around, Swami Jyotirmayananda traces the name Mangalore to a Mangala, a Rajmata of Malabar, a disciple of Yogi Matsyendra Nath. Mangala settled down in

Bolar, where a small temple was constructed in her honour. The temple was rebuilt in 968 A.D. by the ruler of Mangalore and was called Mangala Devi temple. Hence the date of Gorakh Nath, Matsyendra's disciple, may be set at 1000 A.D.

The song of Adi Nath, Bhola man jaaney and several others of Gorakh Nath have been popularised by Kumar Gandharva. I have seen a couple of books of Gorakh Nath's songs, too. These songs are full of Raja Yoga traditions, and sing of Sankhya Yoga rather than of any gods or goddesses. They describe the inter-play of the human body and the mind and the senses, the three gunas. They talk of Tapas and realisation of the single truth, advaita. Gorakh Nath's uncompromising devotion to yoga and his Guru is only echoed by the nirguni



Jnaneshwara

bhajans of Kabir and no one else.

In one song Gorakh Nath sings

O Guru, but I meditate on
the One, the Pure,
I do not approach a second
one.
I know not sorrow, I know
neither pain,
I do not call any physician.
I have the eternal True
Guru as my physician,
I show my pulse to him
only.

The great Gorakh Nath surpassed his Guru Matsyendra Nath.

Jayadeva's Geeta Govinda

Jayadeva Goswami was born in Bengal at the end of the 11th century. His songs, all found in his opera, Gita Govinda, are called as ashtapadi, since they have eight verses each. A raga and tala is indicated for each of the 24 songs in the book, which has many loose slokas also, which interlink the songs into a theme, which is the love of Krishna and Radha and the gopis. 12 ragas are used by the 24 songs, and 5 Talas—Roopak, Nissar, Yati, Ek Tal, Asta Tal.

Some of the ragas mentioned are not in use today, either in the North or the

South. Some others are used either in the North or in the South or in both.

The first song describes the 10 avatars of Krishna (Visnu) in ten verses. The third song, Lalita lavanga lata, is sung in Rag Vasant by Hindustani singers even today. The language is simple Sanskrit, easily understood by even laymen, not only scholars.

Jayadeva's influence is seen in many later composers like Vidyapate. His songs are used, even today often in different ragas, by singers and dancers very frequently. They are equally popular in bhajan groups all over India. Jaya Deva and his wife, who was also a devotee of Radha-Krishna, spent their last years in singing the glories of the Lord in Puri Jagannath. They died at the same time.

Veerasaivas and Vaarkaris

The twelfth century saw the emergence of a powerful movement in Karnataka, led by Basavanna and Allama Prabhu. They worshipped Siva and no one else, and aimed to reform society. Their compositions which record their spiritual experience are in the form of prose-poetry in Kannada, and form a valuable part of Kannada literature known as *vachanas*. Later



Basavanna

Veerasaiva poets composed swara vachanas which take on a musical form. More of this later.

In Maharashtra, Jnaneshwar, who drew his initiation from the Nath tradition, added an element of devotion to the yoga of Naths. Apart from his poetic commentary on the Gita, the famous Jnaneswari, he composed beautiful abhangas, which are surcharged with knowledge and devotion. In one abhanga, he says—

Hereafter, vision is only
that of the Pure One.

Yogiraj (Nivrutti) has
explained this to me.

I have sacrificed my body
and achieved the goal
this has given me
fulfilment.

I have overcome desire and
Maya

I see all as forms of Atman
only.

N. Krishnaswamy served the Academic field as a Faculty in prestigious Education institutions and has contributed in a big way in field of Devotional Music and Patriotic Compositions

Atma is formless, but I
experience It

in the form of the world
here, as the fruit of
sandal tree.

Hereafter there is no
worldliness forme,

There is only the bliss of the
Self.

God, Vitthala, is the ocean
of knowledge,

This I have firmly seen.

His brothers Nivrutti,
Sopan and sister Mukta have
also sung some fine songs. This
is the earliest literature in
Marathi.

Nam Dev was a
contemporary of Jnaneshwar
and has composed some
simple, elegant abhangas in
praise of Vitthala of
Pandharpur. Even his maid
servant, Jana Bai was a
composer, who takes pride in
calling herself a friend of
Jnaneshwar! Nam Dev talks to
Vitthala. He says, in one
abhang,

Vina in hand, Hari on my
lips, I sing of him inside
me,



Allama Prabhu

I forget rice and water,
think only of God.

Forgotten is the body-
consciousness, only the
song of Hari began.

Nama says, give me this
only: let my head be on your
feet.

This bhakti movement is
known as Varkari and has
flooded Maharashtra with
devotion.

Haridasas of Karnataka

The Haridasa movement in
Karnataka which originated
somewhere in the fourteenth
century saw its pinnacle in the
fifteenth–sixteenth century
and has not died out comple-
tely even later, to this day. This
loose system of singers of the
glory of Vitthala comprises
some great poets-
musicologists. It was
Purandara Dasa who
systematised the teaching of
Karnatak music, it was he who
used the important ragas of
Karnatak music to great effect
in his songs.

The Haridasas mastered
melody and rhythm and the
word as no other group did.
Purandara Dasa is the real
forefather of Tyagaraja in a
musical sense. And Haridasa's
devotion to Krishna is of such
a high order, that they may be
used to illustrate the
aphorisms of Narada himself.

The first Haridasa is
Narahari Teertha (1250–1335).
But only three songs of his
have been found. Then come
the five greatest Haridasas.

The first of them is



Purandara Dasa

Sripadaraja Swami, (1430–86)
head of Mulabagal Math, not
far from Bangalore. His Ankita
(signature—pen name) was
Ranga Vitthala. About 80 songs
of his are current, the most
popular one being
Kangalivyatako Kaveri
Rangana Nodada in Todi.

Sripadaraja's great disciple
Vyasaraya Swami (1447–1539)
was the Raja Guru of the
Vijayanagar Empire. It was he
who accorded respectability to
the composers of Kannada,
who were considered very
inferior to scholars who wrote
in Sanskrit. The most famous
of his songs, of course, is
Krishna nee beganey baaro, in
Kalyani, which forms the focus
of many a Bharata Natya
performance. Another song,
Kolalanooduv chaturanyaarey
pelammayya, in Mohana,
describes the charms of
Krishna's flute, taken straight
from Srimad Bhagavata.

Among the many disciples

of Vyasaraya, three are outstanding—Purandara Dasa (1484–1564), the greatest of them all, together with Kanaka Dasa (16th century) and Vadiraja Swami (1481) they wrote beautiful songs with ankithas Purandara Vitthala, Kagineley Adi Kesava and Hayavadana respectively.

In Purandara Dasa we find a rare combination of intense devotion, burning renunciation, a mission to reform society, a deep scholarship and a mastering of melody and rhythm along with mysticism. Hence his songs have entered the concert dais and forms an important component of every musician's repertoire. His Guru, Vyasaraya has composed a song extolling Purandara Dasa as the greatest of the Dasas. In a rare song in which he throws light on his own life, Purandara Dasa sings, in Pantuvarali,

All that happened is for
the best,

It all proved to be a means
to my service to Sridhara.

I thought I was a landlord,
the beggars bowl was
beneath my dignity. It
was my wife, God bless
her, who made me take to
begging.

I thought I was an
aristocrat and didn't care
to wear the tulsi garland.
It was Purandara Vitthala
who made me wear the
tulsi garland.

There are some sanskrit

songs also from his pen.

Apart from being sung in concerts Purandara Dasa's songs are on the lips of ordinary people, beggar, housewives, workers and devotees.

I lived in Madras 35 years ago. I have heard Purandara Dasa's songs from a man dressed like a Dasa, Tamboori in hand, beggar's jhola on his shoulder, singing in a clear loud voice, "Enu dhanyalo Lakumi entha maanyalo", walking majestically along Edward Elliotts Road. I was told he was the great Pudukottai Gopala Krishna Bhagavata himself, singing devaranama. I can never forget the impact of his song, and the grandeur of the rendering.

Kanakadasa was born a shepherd chieftain. It is said that the Lord himself asked him to renounce his worldly power and wealth to become a dasa. He was asked to take initiation from Sri Vyasaraya. The great saint, in a flippant mood, said, you, shepherd, what mantra should I give you,



Kanaka Dasa

a mantra of Kona (buffalo). The faithful disciple repeated the Kona-mantra, sincerely. He was blessed by the vision of a great buffalo, the vehicle of Yama. The great beast promised him that he would help Kanaka whenever he thought of him—he did, too.

Kanaka's songs are a little more philosophical, a little more erudite than those of Purandara Dasa. In one popular song, he says,

This body is yours; so is the
life in it;

Yours too are the sorrows
and joys of our daily life.

Whether it is sweet word,
Veda or story of law,

The power in the ear which
hears them is yours;

The vision in the eye that
gazes on a young woman's
beauty

That vision is also yours.

This body of ours and the five
senses caught in the net of
maya

O source of all desire the
body bears,

Kesava of Kagineley, is man
his own master?

Nay all this being is yours.

—(Translation, after Masti
Venkatesa Iyengar)

Vadiraja was another ascetic Haridasa, who worshipped Vishnu with a horse's head. The songs of Kanaka and Vadiraja are as beautiful as those of Purandaradasa, they deserve a greater acceptance than they enjoy at present.

Later Haridasas

The Haridasa tradition continued to flourish, even if it lacked the original intensity, through the 17th and 18th centuries. The spirit of devotion was kept up by saints like Vijaya Dasa (1683–1750), Jagannatha Dasa (1728–1810), Mohana Dasa (1730–1815), Gopala Dasa (b.1729) and later by Mahi Pati Dasa, there were a couple of women among the minstrels, Helaranakantte Giryamma (1691–1725) being well known. The great mystic Guru, Raghavendra Swami's single composition we have is very beautiful—Indu enagay Sri Govinda. Vijaya Dasa's songs are so similar to Purandara Dasa's that he is considered to be an avatara of Purandara Dasa.

Even to this day Haridasa literature has not stopped growing, but the original fervour and creative genius is sadly lacking—it is now mere versification.

Swara Vachanas

The vachana literature of Veerasaivas are free from all restrictions. In a vachana, Basavanna says—

*Taala maana
sarisanavanariyey
Ojey bajaavane
lekkavanariyey
Amrita gana
devaganavanariyey
Kudalasangama Deva
ninagey kedillavaagi
Aanu olidantey haaduvey.*

He says, I do not know calculations of tala, weightage of syllables, or the letter-

groups. Siva, you are free from Death, I sing as I please.

In contrast to this type of composition, gradually a specialised, stylised song evolved, with a pallavi, followed by several verses, with a rhyme and rhythm and invariably carries a signature-ankita. This song is called swaravachana, each song having a raga of its own. Jedara Dasimayya and Akka Mahadevi have also composed swaravachanas, in the twelfth century. But the greatest among them are Nijaguna Sivayogi (About 1500 AD) Muppina Shadakshari (about 1,500AD) and Sarpabhushana Sivayogi, (1795–1839), among the scores of composers. They have sung their songs in ragas like Kambodhi, Bhairavi, Nati, Sourashtra, Todi, Pantuvarali, Shankarabharana, Aheri, Desi, Kedara Gowla, Kalyani, Mohana, Saveri and other ragas, in talas like Rupaka, Matta, Jhampey, Trividey, Atta, Eka, Dhruva, Adi, Chowtala.

Swaravachanas are characterised by a closeness to earth, but ambitions soaring to the heavens. Their language is simple—the spoken language, with no literary embellishments, but rich in imagery and spiritual experience.

Nijaguna's "Kaivalya Paddhati", "Subodha Sara" of Muppina Shadakshari and Sarpabhushana's "Kaivalya Kalpavallari" are fine sources of swaravachanas. Both Nijaguna and Shadakshari did

tapas on Shambhulinga Hill near Mysore. But while Nijaguna emphasise jnana, Muppina Shadakshari stresses bhakti. Sarpabhushana Shivayogi follows the tradition of Nijaguna. In recent times, Sisunal shariff (1819–89) though a muslim and Vedanta Shivarama Shastri, (19th century), a brahmin have contributed tattwa padas which are also a form of swaravachanas; Joladarashi Doddana Gowda's songs are also similar to swaravachanas.

This vast musical heritage of Karnataka deserve greater attention from musicians and musicologists than they have enjoyed till now.

Hindi Songs

The four pillars of devotional songs in the Hindi belt are Tulsi, Meera, Sur, Kabir, though there are scores of other composers.

Kabir (1440–1518) belonged to Varanasi and often sang about Rama. But his Rama is not the son of Dasaratha, but a manifestation of Sachchidananda Brahman. In a song, immortalised by kumar



Kabir

Gandharva, Kabir sings, "Ram is flaw-less, pure, everything else is touched by the defects of Prakriti"

*Ram Niranjan nyaaraa rey,
Anjan sakal pasaaraa rey.*

Kabir's songs are often full of the imagery of his trade, weaving—as in "Jheeni Jheeni bini'chadariya" (a cloth is being woven with the sound jheeni jheeni).

Using simple language he expounds the great mysteries of life, and of death.

Tulsidas is another Rama's devotee in Hindi, but he loves the personal aspect of Rama. In his song "Thumaki chalata Ramachandra", he describes Rama, the child. His Ramacharita Manasa in the Avadehi language is, arguably, the greatest epic in any language, for no other book has continued to inspire and nurture millions of people over the centuries. Tulsi lived in the 16th century, but his date and place are uncertain.

Surdas (1479–1584) was the poet of Krishna in Mathura-Brindavan. His songs



Meerabai



Guru Nanak

are in Brij bhasha, which is spoken in this area. He has written hundreds of songs, which, when read together, becomes a commentary on Sri Bhagavata Purana. His songs describe Krishna in all his glory, from childhood to the end.

Mirabai (1504–63), the princess of Rajasthan sings in a dialect which borders on Gujarati also. She is mad in her love for Krishna. She says—"Heri mai to prem diwani, mero dard na jaaney koi." (O, I am mad with love, no one understands my pain.)

Tansen was the great composer of Dhrupad songs, a

disciple of Swami Haridas, was a jewel in Akbar's Court. There are muslim devotees of Krishna, like Raskhan (1533–1618) of Brindavan.

Guru Nanak (14th century) and the other Gurus of Sikhism like Arjun Dev and Teg Bahadur have composed hundreds of songs which are used in worship by the sikhs.

Marathi Songs

In a couplet, Acharya Vinoba records the characteristics of the great Marathi Saints—

Jnan Dev, Nam Dev, Nath, Tukoba, Samartha, Sumartha, Jnani, Premi, Shanta, Viragi, Karmarata, Karmarata.

Jnaneshwar was the man of knowledge, Nam Dev, his contemporary, was a lover of God. Ek Nath, who came later, was of a serene disposition. Tukaram was famous for his renunciation; his contemporary, Samartha Ram Das was a Karmayogi. Ram Das was also unique because he adored Rama while all the other saints worshipped



Tulasidas



Tansen

Vitthala of Pandharpur, even as the Haridasas of Karnataka did.

Nam Dev (1270–1350, a Tailor by profession, sings—

*Pandhari nivasa Chandra
bhage snaan*

Anika darsan Vithobache.

*Henchi majha ghado
janma janmaantari*

Magane Sri Hari nahi dooje.

*Mukhi sada nama
santaanche darsana*

Jani Janardhana aisa bhav.

*Nama mhane nitya tujhe
maha dwaari*

*Kirtana gajari
sapremaache.*

Let me live in Pandharpur, bathe in river Chandrabhaga, And see Vithoba. Let me have this, birth after birth, let me be merged in Sri Hari, I want nothing else. Let your name be on my lips always and have the sight of saints, and a feeling that God is in man. Nama says, daily, at the great entrance to your home, let me sing your glory with love.

The same desire is expressed by Tukaram (1598–1650) when he sings—

*Hechi dan dega deva tujha
visar na vhava. (Give me this
gift only, that I may never
forget You.)*

In a Hindi song, Ek Nath (1545–1591) says—

*Guru Kripanjana payo
mere bhai,*

Ram bina kachu janat nahi.

*An̄tar Rama bahir Rama
Jaha dekhu Taha Rama hi
Rama.*

I have the grace of Guru as an eye-ointment, brother! I do not know anything except Rama. Rama is inside, He is outside, wherever (I look, I see Rama only.

Samartha Ram Daes (1608–81) sings—

*Sing of Rama, meditate on
Rama,*

*Rama is the resting place of
the soul.*

(Rama gava, Rama dhyaava, Rama Jeevicha visaava).

Thus the great Marathi saints illuminate the period from the thirteenth century to the seventeenth. In between, and later, many other singers have maintained the tradition. Even today, when a Madgulkar sings—

*“Indrayani kaathi, Devachi
Alandi, laagali samaadhi,
Jnaanesachi”—it is in the
same strain.*

Gujarat

Before Narasimh Mehta (1414–80), Gujarat was full of Shiva and Shakta tradition. Narasimh Mehta spread devotion to Rama and Krishna. His “Vaishnava jana to tene kahiye je pida paraayi jaane ray” became the theme song of Gandhiji’s life and became a national anthem of India. The saint says, in that song, that he is the true devotee who understands others’ problems and goes to their help, with no



Narasimh Mehta

sense of attachment in him.

Another Gujarati song I love to sing is :

“Ekaj day chigri Mahanal”. The song is by a Bhatt of the Gandhi Ashram and says—O Great Fire, give me only one spark.

“Mangal mandir kholo daya maya” is a very popular song, composed by Mahatma Gandhi’s cousin Maganlal Gandhi, who, it is said, died with his song on his lips—O Graceful One, open the door of your auspicious temple.

Thus Gujarati songs span a period of some six centuries.

Bengal

Bengal is famous for its musical nature. The land is full of music—of the folk (like Baul) and classical variety. But though Goswami Jaya Deva was from Bengal, his “Gita Govinda” is written in Sanskrit.

Vidyapati (1350–1430) wrote erotic poetry of the Radhakrishna cult in his

(Contd. on P. 47)

Use of Laya in Compositions of Musical Trinity

—Bangalore K. Venkataram



Bangalore K. Venkataram

Shyama Sastry (1762–1827), Thyagaraja (1767–1847) and Dikshitar (1775–1835) are popularly known as the “Musical Trinity”. Shyama Sastry, Thyagaraja and Dikshitar lived for 65, 80 and 60 years respectively and it may be noted that all three of them lived for 52 years between 1775 and 1827.

When we undertake a study of the “Use of Laya” in their compositions, we have to first enunciate what we mean by the term “Laya”. Laya is “Khaara” (Hot?); this ingredient is essential. But the “Ouchithya” (appropriateness) of this term as to When, Where, How and How much of it is to be used makes the intelligent artiste recognise the proper usage of this.

Maadhurya (aesthetic pleasantness) is the essential factor. “Laya” is a highly “abstract” term and this can only be felt and experienced and not easy to be written about.

This is purely “anubhava vedya”. Thaala is a ‘covering’ for Laya. The time (musical time) is what is called as “Sangeetha Kaala”, and musical-time-measure is referred to as Kaala Praamaana - Kaala Nirnaya.

The term Laya is of very great significance and has “a viraat swaroopa”. This Laya Maadhurya has been very aesthetically employed in the compositions of the musical trinity.

Laya is inherent in both the Kalpitha Sangeetha and Kalpana Sangeetha. This is purely to be experienced, anubhava vedya like the aspects of sight (colours), smell (scents, flowers, bad odour, etc.), touch (cold, ice cold, warm, hot, etc.), hearing (shabda - nadha, whisper, thunder, etc.), taste (salt, sour, sweet, etc.). Laya aspects have only to be experienced and cannot be explained in writing. Various aspects of Laya in the Raaga Aalapana exhibit that there is the inherent predominance of Laya in the Raaga Aalapana.

Certain Raagas take very slow tempo, certain Raagas

take medium tempo and certain fast; most of them include a combination of different tempos.

Here again “Kaala Praamaana” is to be achieved by experience. This aspect as to How much, How and Why for musical text, Sangathis, coupled with “Vishraanthi” (Silence) as essential have to be learnt by lot of listening. The variety of this aspect decides the particular personality of the Raaga which is the Kalpaana aspect of a musician. ‘Daarini’ and ‘Kaala Harana’ (Shudda Saveri), ‘Munduvanakka’ and ‘Yochana’ (Durbār), ‘Baalagopaala’ and ‘Chinthayamaam’. (Bhairavi), ‘O Ranga Shaayi’ and ‘Maa Jaanaki’ (Kambodi) take different Layas in the same Raaga depending on the Vishraanthi provided for each krithi thus providing an independent exclusive separate personality for each of these compositions.

In this Vishraanthi the artiste has to ‘FILL UP THE REST PERIOD’ with “RAAGA BHAVA”. “Bhavaabhivyakthi” is essential provided through “Layabhivyakthi”.

A variety of Laya can be observed in the compositions of the Musical Trinity. Slow tempo raagas are Aahiri, Neelaambari, Yadukulakaambodi, Aananda Bhairavi, etc. Most Raagas employ multiple-tempo like in Thodi,

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Kalyaani, Bhairavi, Moohana, Madhyamaavathi, Kaambodi, etc. Only Madhya Laya—Durithi Laya (Medium Fast tempo) are employed in Raagas like Phalamanjari, Maalavi, Amruthavarshini, etc.

The compositions of Thyagaraja employ a variety of Thaalas, Tempos, "Eduppus" (take of) and the "Arudhis" (separating points). The Adi Thaala, Single Kalai, Saama Eduppu items like 'Nenarunchi', 'Samajavara', 'Sri Raama Paadama, etc., Half eduppu; 'Theratheeyaga Raada', 'Shivashivashiva Enarada', 'Raamabhakti' etc., $\frac{3}{4}$ Eduppu; 'Padavini', "Raktanalinadala" in 'Janaki Ramana', etc.

The very exclusive contribution of Thyagaraja is the krithis composed with an Eduppu of $1\frac{1}{2}$ (which is normally and erroneously called as $\frac{3}{4}$ Eduppu) as in 'Seethaapathe', 'Daridaapule', 'Ganaamurthe', 'Sarasasaama', 'Sanaathana' and a number of such compositions. None of the other composers of the musical trinity have adopted this structural Laya as done by Thyagaraja. There are also compositions with "atheetha" eduppu like 'Cha-de buddhi',

'Ne-Morabettithe', etc. There are also compositions rendered in Trishra Nadai like Rama Neevadukendu'.

Compositions of Shyama Sastry like 'Shankari Shankuru' are also rendered in this structure. There are abundant instances of krithis in 2-kalais.

Eduppus like $\frac{1}{4}$, $\frac{1}{2}$ and $\frac{3}{4}$ ths are employed apart from the sama eduppu. Examples: $\frac{1}{4}$ —'Kaddanu variki', $\frac{1}{2}$ —'Enduku Peddala', 'Mohana Rama', $\frac{3}{4}$ —'Kaligiyunte', 'Raamakatha', 'Dinamani' etc. Compositions set to Roopaka thala (Chatushra) of 6 counts now rendered in 3 counts of two beats followed by a wave.

Earlier texts indicate these compositions in the structure of 2 + 4 counts while all these compositions are now rendered in the 3 count measure of 2 beats and a wave. The Mishra Jhampe krithis like 'Hecharikagaa' in Yadukula-kambodi are now rendered in Khanda Chaapu.

There are several compositions of Thyagaraja in the seven count measure indicated exclusively as Mishra Chaapu or Trishra Thriputa. The earlier texts give

a notation of 3 + 4 pulses for the former and 6 + 8 pulses for the later. However, all these compositions are now designated Mishra Chaapu though they are rendered practically in Thrishra Thriputa.

Chaapu indicates 2 beats of unequal intervals. Mishra chaapu will take 2 beats of 3+4. The present-day Mishra chaapu is 3+2+2 which is nothing but Triputa. The other contemporary usage has been a wave of 3 pulses followed by two beats of two pulses each. There is actually no Thaala commencing with a wave, though this has become the contemporary practice.

Shyama Sastry's krithis are designated "Kadalee Paaka" (plantain). He is called Thaala Prasthaaram Sastri. There are several swara jhathis and varnas in addition to Mishra Chaapu krithis involving Viloma Chaapu krithis. Thyagaraja's krithis are designated "Draksha Rasa" (grapes); there is a variety of Laya in his krithis which include several types like Upachara, Uthsava Sampradaya, Pancharathna krithis, Geya Natakas (Operas), etc.,

Dikshitar's Krithis are designated "Naarikela Paka" (Coconut). These involve a lot of intricacies to follow.

Compositions of Shyama Sastry include varnas in Ananda Bhairavi in Khanda Atta and Begada—2 kalais Adi, etc. Swara Jhathis include the Bhairavi and Yadukula-kambodi in Thriputa and

Thodi in Adi. "Ninnu Vinaga Mari" in Poorvikalyaani set to Viloma Chaapu in Deshadi is an item which was presented by great maestros like Ariyakkudi and Alathur Brothers.

The expansive treatment of this item by Alathur Brothers accompanied by Lalgudi Jayaraman and Palghat Mani Iyer bear ample testimony to the sophistication involved in this composition. Dikshitar's Krithis include the Navagraha

Stothra Krithis set to different Thaalas like Chathushra Dhruva¹, Chathushra Madhya², Mishra Jhampe³, Trishra Triputa⁴, Khanda Atta⁵, etc. His Navavarana⁶, and Panchalinga Kshetra, krithis⁷ also involve several infrequent thaalas.

A detailed survey of the Thaalaas and Laya employed by the musical trinity is beyond the scope of this article. More difficult it is to write down and explain these

aspects of use of Laya which can be more explicitly done by a demonstration. The limitations of writing these highly abstract and manodharma aspects of Kalpitha Sangeetha restricts this article to a mere explanation and narration of their compositions.

It may thus be seen that both the Kalpana and Kalpitha aspects of Laya are made use of in rendering the great compositions of the musical trinity.

1. (Suryamurthe—Sourastrva)

2. (Chandram Bhaja—Asaavari)

3. (Budhamashrayami—Natakuranji)

4. (Brihaspathe—Ataana)

5. (Sri Shukra Bhagavantham—Faraz)

6. (Krithis in Khanda Atta (Sri Kamatambikay—Kambodi), Ekahanda (Sri Kamalambika—Sree Raga)

7. In Khanda Thriputa (Guruguha Swami—Bhanumathi or Vanaspathi, the 4th Mela), Khanda Eka-(Kamalambike—Manoranjani or Maanavathi, the 5th Mela).

Arunagirinathar—Thiruppugazhs

—Bangalore K. Venkataram

The Tala System is perhaps the most difficult and complicated branch of Carnatik music. The time measures used by all nations put together will form but a fraction of the innumerable varieties of rhythm found in Carnatik Music" observes Dr. M. Balamuralikrishna. Arunagirinathar and his "Thiruppugazhs" are examples of this observation.

Bharatha traces the origins of Music to "Saama Veda". Thala kriyas like Anu Dhrutha, Dhrutha, Laghu owe their origin to the Hastha Vinyasaas of "Veda Paataas". Mathanga,

Sarngadeva and others have discussed "Chandas" in Sangeetha Sastra, In total, what is "Chandas to Kaavya" is "Thaala to Gaana".

Every language has its own "Chandas Gathi"! Sanskrit Chandas did not continue in the chandas of other languages. Each language has its own "Guna Bhaasha Utchaarana" (ಗುಣಭಾಷಾ ಉಚ್ಚಾರಣಾ) depending on the "Swara Bhaaraa" of that "Bhasha" (ಸ್ವರಭಾರ) (language). Arunagirinathar has created these Chandas Thalaas or "Thiruppugazh Thalaas" on this principle.

Arunagirinathar was an impeccable master of rhythm in Indian Music; he blazed a new trail, not only in rhythm but in the compositions of a unique genus of devotional lyrics called "Thiruppugazhs".

"Thiru+pugazhs" means "Deva Sthuthis". Thiruppugazhs are different from "Thevarams" of Araiyaars, "Paasurams" of Alwars and "Padikkams" of Nayanmars. The unique feature of these Thiruppugazhs is the "Chandas Talaas" adopted, also called as "Thiruppugaz Talas".

One can notice the virtuosity of Arunagirinathar in handling an amazing variety of Thalaa. No music scholar, so far, has been able to identify all these Thiruppugazh Talaas. Arunagirinathar has generally followed the basic principles of

Saptha Thala-Pancha gathi scheme; but many of his usage of Talas in "Chandas meter" in the Thiruppugazhs defy classification. Though many of the compositions can be brought under the 35-Thala scheme, 108-Thala scheme, Navasandhi Thala Scheme and others, there are many others which do not fall under the purview of any of these Thala classifications. The

Thirupputgazhs is a vast ocean of sophisticated time measures; Studies attempted so far have only touched the fringe of these intricacies.

Arunagirinathar was born in Thiruvannamalai. As per the Research study of some of the inscriptions, old texts and Karna parampara collected and published in 1918 in "Indian Antiquity", he lived in the period of Proudha Deva Maharaja and later rulers. He is not new to Karnataka; he lived during the days of Proudha Deva Raya who ruled Vijayanagar between 1924-46.

It is said Arunagirinathar was a regular participant in the spiritual discussions organised by eminent Shaivaite scholars like Prbhu Deva of Kallu Mutt, Lakkanna, Dandesi, Jakkanacharya, etc.

Arunagirinathar is famous for his Chandas (Sandam, in Tamil), rhythmic patterns in his compositions. It is a beautiful flow full of pulsating rhythm. The matrical rhythms of Thiruppugazhs are very close to musical rhythm. Thiruppugazhs stimulate even those who cannot understand

Tamil, because of the effervescent rhythmical arrangement that seems to follow definite Thala cycles. He himself rendered these Thiruppugazhs.

The later day musicians seem to have given a distinct identity to them by applying suitable Tala measures. These many a times appear more an intellectual exercise than an aesthetic treat. Besides making these compact, the efforts seem to have also given them a punch. Some of the Ragaas like Kunthalavarali, Jhunjhuti, Yemankalyani, Sindhubhairavi, Hamsanandi in which these Thirupugazhs are now couched seem to support the above premise, as these ragas were not even heard in those days.

Of the 16,000 Thiruppugazhs reported to have been composed, about 1,300 have been collected by strenuous efforts and published with a foreword by V.C. Chandalvaraya Sastry. These provide a picture of the Talaas in use about 500 years back. A mention is also made of the ragas in use then. In these, Varali, Sinkandi, Seekaamaran, Vipanchi, Gowdi, Bhairavi, Lalitha, Koushikam, Gauli, Malahadi, Bhowli, Varati, Patamanjari, Dhanashi, Panchama, Deshi, Kuranji and certain pannas have been indicated. In the Talas, Chatchatputa, Chaachaputa, Shatpitha-Puthrika, Sampadveshtaka, Udghatitha, etc., are mentioned. Thiruppugazhs

involve several other unknown unidentified Talas.

Though Thiruppugazhs play an important part in the music of Muruga Devotees, they entered the contemporary concert arena due to the efforts of Conjeevaram Nayana Pillai, Chittoor Subramanya Pillai, Alathur Bros. etc., who invariably included Thirupugzhs in their repertore in concerts.

There are no Suladi Talaas (Saptha Thala, Panchajathi) in certain categories, though we may manipulate some by the combinations of Thala and Nadais. Example: 15 counts (5 x Thrishra or 3 x Khanda), 21 counts (3 x Mishra or 7 x Trishra), 24 counts (8 x 3 kalais), 25 counts (5xKhanda), 26 counts (13 x 2 kalais), 27 counts (9 x 3 kalais), 28 counts (14 x 2 kalais), 30 counts (6 x Khanda or 5 x Trishra-2 kalais). But there are no talas at all for 19 or 31 counts; There are Thiruppugazhs in such infrequent counts also. We have Thiruppugazhs in the counts of $7\frac{1}{2}$, $10\frac{1}{2}$, $15\frac{1}{2}$ and so on.

There are a number of combinations of a Tala of the same count. For example a Thala of 11 counts (interspersed as 3+3+5, 4+4+3, 5+3+3, 4+3+4, 3+4+4) and $5\frac{1}{2}$ Beats/counts (as $1\frac{1}{2}+1\frac{1}{2}+2\frac{1}{2}$, $2+2+1\frac{1}{2}$, $2\frac{1}{2}+1\frac{1}{2}+1\frac{1}{2}$, $2+1\frac{1}{2}+2$, $1\frac{1}{2}+2+2$). Such network are available in abundance in Thiruppugazhs.

(Source material from:
T.S.Parthasarathy,
B.V.K. Sastry, etc.)

Evolution of Khayal

Lalita Ubhayaker

That a true understanding of Indian music is not possible without some knowledge of the Indian cultural and spiritual heritage, may sound common place. But it is a point nevertheless worth making as Dr. Arnold Baker, the late Dutch scholar of Indian Music has written in the new Oxford History of Music, "It is impossible to divorce Indian music from the whole structure of Indian culture and philosophy with which it is interwoven, in a number of ways from the earliest times of which we have records."

From time immemorial, Indian music has been an essential component of divine worship. We know that the most sublime songs both in the North and South, were inspired by religious feeling and spiritual awareness. While the Bhajan is purely the expression of Bhakti, the *Khayal* having its roots in the same fountainhead, evolved its own characteristic form and pattern wherein, with an economy of words, *Bhava* and *Rasa* predominate and take

over, while in the Bhajan the *Sahitya* reigns supreme.

Also the melody by itself with little reliance upon words, can become an expression of a particular mood or emotion. Simple phrases like '*Ajahu na aaye*' or '*Naiya paar karo*' become charged with meaning



Lalita Ubhayaker

and fervour in the way they are sung. In this context, it is

worth recalling Joseph Campbell's words with reference to Houseman's statement, "Poetry is not the thing said but a way of saying it".

He says, "It is a reaffirmation of the first axiom of all creative art, whether it is poetry, music, dance, architecture, painting or sculpture, which is mainly, that art is not like science and logic of reference but a release from reference and rendition of immediate experience. The presentation of images, ideas and forms in such a way that will communicate not primarily a thought or even a feeling, but an impact".

The intellectual seriousness in Dhrupad, gave place in the *Khayal* to vibrant humanism. Songs closely woven with the daily pattern of life, incorporating the metaphysical urges side by side, with relationships and environmental factors, show that the *Khayaliya's* task is not cloistered or severed from life. That it is his individual view of life, his relationship and environment which mould his expression, is apparent from famous *bandishes* like '*Jhanana Baaje*' in Chayanat, '*Kaise kaise bolat loguva*' in Behagada and '*Manana kanari*' in Gaud Malhar. A *cheez* condenses a lifetime's experience or a supreme moment in life into a single

Lalitha Ubhayaker is a leading vocalist and has been contributing to the progress of classical music. She is deeply interested in projecting and supporting youth talent.

line, an entire story into a mood.

While there is no explicit Vedic aesthetic, the key-note of the period was the search of truth. Hymns and chants were either in praise of Gods or had protective significance. Nature poetry, born of a sense of wonder and admiration, had its beginning even during those times. To find affinity in Nature, was to be in tune with the infinite. It may not be a vain conjecture that our seasonal melodies, Rags such as Sur, Miya, Megh and Gaud Malhars, Basant, Bahar, Hindol created for the seasons, proclaim the continuity of this belief i.e., the 'indissoluble unity' of Man with Nature. Hsreh Ho demands that "a work of art should exhibit fusion of the rhythm of the spirit with the movement of living things".

The time cycle observed meticulously till of late, augments and unfolds this approach to a greater degree. That particular Ragas, create a particular mood, conveys a sense of harmony with the surrounding world, changing seasons, hours of day and night. This establishes identification of the individual with Nature or *Prakriti*, i.e., the entire phenomenal world in its relation to time space.

The *Khayal gayaki* has followed in the footsteps of the Dhrupad, in its adherence to *Shruti*, the concentration upon Swar and the practice of visualisation that is identical with the worship of the Divine

as the *dhyana murthi* in meditation and sculpture. *Rag murthi* in music must have been the inheritance of this idea of self-identification with the object of worship.

The creation of a *bandish*, as part of literature of a highly personalised nature and its rendering wherein the specific tools of one's artistic equipment and training are employed within the strict discipline of the framework of a Raga, both release the mind by means of this very concentration into becoming one with Reality, beyond the mundane and tangible. The *Khayal* becomes a dual emotional and poetic expression, a flowering from the personal philosophy of the composer to the singer.

For instance, in the composition '*Niranjana kije mukta mero*' in Hussaini Todi, the composer was expressing his view of salvation and the singer develops the same theme in those very words, but he expresses not necessarily the author's experience, but his own.

The structure and concept of *khayal* is akin to the individual's search inwards to find the structure of Reality. The *Khayal* is a development and a further change from the austere Dhrupad which demands faithful accuracy and rigid conformity to form. *Khayal*, as the word suggests, means a thought, a musician's imagination with which he weaves a variety of musical elements, to bring out its beauty. It is endowed with the

unique quality of individuality in that it offers scope to the musician to express the *Rag murthi* and *Rag Ras* and *Sahitya* according to his own *Anubhava* and *manodharma*. The *Khayal* therefore appears nearer to being a mirror of life. It is a fabric of beauty spun from the threads of the individual's experience, personality, his beliefs and view of life. That the same *Khayal* or *Raga* or *Rasa* rendered by the different musicians or the same musician on different occasions can be vastly different, indicates this quality of spontaneity. It facilitates the union of intuition and expression.

SYMBOLISM: is a very essential component of ritual & worship and has no less a place in our music than in our systems of philosophy. Shiva himself is symbolised as Time and the Timeless. His *damaru* represents the *Aakaash Tatva*, the principle of other-sound. '*Damaru Hara Kara Baje*' is the song of evolution. Krishna's flute is yet another symbol of *Nada Brahma*, calling us to leave all worldly concerns. This too figures in countless *Khayals*.

The remarkable quality of Hindu thought and philosophy like the tenets of the Gita, reflected in these songs below, is that they have proved responsive and flexible to new needs. It is equally remarkable that, the *Khayal* emerging as a new art form, could encompass the ancient ideals and communicate them and

fulfil the needs of a new age. Change is inevitable. Change is growth. The music while undergoing the compelling changes of outward form, caused by historical factors retained its intrinsic values.

1.. *Gaho mana sab rasako rasare, sara*

Griha kamini kanchana dhana tyago sumiranaa ko shyama udara

in Rag Gunakali

2.. *Re karatara karo beda paar, tune rancho hai sansar,*

Tu hai Ram, Tu hai Rahim, Tu Parabrahma Parameshwar

in Rag Ahir Bhairav.

3.. *Shiva aadi mada antha...* in Rag Bhairav.

4.. *Teeratha ko sab kare pooja kare vaasana na mare,*

Kaise ke Bhava thare in Rag Tilak Kamod

5.. *Sakala manasa janma dulamba hai...* in Rag Lalit Pancham

RASA THEORY:

Prof. Hiriyantha in his art experience has lucidly explained how predominance of Rasa came to be insisted upon as indispensable to artistic excellence. Rasa primarily meaning 'Taste', the point being that no knowledge of Rasa is possible unless one directly partakes in it. The aim of art is to induce a state of *Ananda* and experience pure joy, through aesthetic delight and attitude, restoring

equanimity to the mind and helping one to find temporary relief from the misery of existence which is constantly disturbing one. The migrating from our narrow self constitutes the secret of aesthetic delight. The essential function of the musician who rises to this mood, is to communicate it. This process of communion is termed *Rasa* in Indian aesthetics.

We are aware that excellence of a composition or a good rendering of a Rag, is not all that is needed for it to be worthy of being considered as art. It has to be *Rasavath* and the listener a *rasika*, i.e., a *Sahrudaya* adequately equipped for its true appreciation. We have observed in *Khayal* singing that no matter how excellent the skill displayed in singing, it is of little consequence if it does not arouse due and immediate response by which the consummation of a work is brought about. The *Khayal* is artistic communication of an intimate nature. The composer and the performer with their creativity and technique produce meaningful music, necessarily adding a great deal of themselves.

The listener with his receptivity and open-mindedness becomes involved and discovers new vistas according to the quality of his own aesthetic, individual emotional being and thus completing the process in empathy. It is interesting to view this in the light of *Rasa* as the common factor binding

the singer, listener and the song into one, embodying the unity of consciousness.

We must note the emphasis of individuality in European art, while in Indian aesthetics, the aim is to lose it. In the *Khayal*, this is accomplished by means of sublimation. What a listener feels while listening to a poignant melody or a song of gay abandon and the expression of *Sringar*, *Karuna* or *Bhakti Rasa* is not an identification with an individual emotion but because of the superb portrayal and experience of *Ananda*. It has been established that *Ananda* is at once the most pure, the most elevating and intense joy that is derived from the contemplation of the beautiful and that it brings with it an intuition of Reality. Glimpses of Reality are revealed to Man in moments of exaltation as love by the lover, as truth by the philosopher and as beauty by the artiste. Beethoven has said. "Music is greater than Wisdom". Our forbears seem to have known that in the singing one comes closer to the perception of reality than in discourses. The transition from *Dhrupad* to *Khayal* appears natural and spontaneous because it holds within its orbit the origins of our musical tradition, continuity of its idiom and the basic character of its aims and objectives. The search for Truth, the contemplation of the Beautiful, *Sangeeta* as *Yogasadhana* and the *Rasa* theory are all absorbed in it. Its prime purpose is to satisfy spiritually,

VENKATESHA NATYA MANDIR (Regd.)

Rasa Sanje

Guru Radha Sridhar, a disciple of renowned Bharata Natyam exponents U.S. Krishna Rao and Chandra Bhagadevi, late Muthiah Pillai, Venkatalakshamma and Keshavamurthy is trained in Karnatic music under Vidwan Pallavi Chandra Singh and in mrudangam under Vidwan T.A.S. Mani.

Venkatesha Natya Mandir, a dance institution, established by her 30 years ago, has trained scores of aspiring dancers who are successful performing artistes at National and International levels.

A teacher par excellence, Radha has beautifully choreographed much sought after Bharathanatyam numbers. Her special choreographies for Doordarshan have been widely acclaimed and frequently telecast on popular public demand.

She has choreographed, produced and presented 15 Dance Dramas. They include Ramayana, Kaliya Mardana, Koluru Kodagusu, Geetha Govinda, Pampa's Neelanjana Nrithya, Shivaji, Buddha and Megha Sandesha to name a few.

She is the recipient of many prestigious Awards including Karnataka State Rajyotsava Award, Karnataka Kala Thilaka, etc.

Venkatesha Natya Mandira proudly celebrates its 30th Anniversary in August 1999 at ADA Ranga Mandira, Bangalore. Prominent dancers from India and abroad feature in a cultural Ex-travaganza 'RASA SANJE' to mark the event. The programs are as follows:

Venue: ADA Rangamandira, Bangalore Time: 6.30 P.M.

22nd Aug. 99	—	Group Ensemble; Venkatesha Natya Mandir Indrani Parthasarathy; Rama Vaidyanathan
23rd Aug. 99	—	Group Ensemble; Venkatesha Natya Mandir Pulakesi; Poornima Ashok
24th Aug. 99	—	Group Ensemble; Venkatesha Natya Mandir; Nandini Mehta; Prathibha Prahlad
25th Aug. 99	—	Manasa Prakash; Navya Nataraj; Vyjayanthi Kashi

aesthetically, sensually and emotionally. Rhyme and Rhythm do not appear contrived or laboured but are spontaneous. At the same time, it is neither complete nor self-sufficient in itself but leaves something unsaid, so that the listener who is a participant, is free to complete what is left incomplete.

We see that while there was fierce resistance to the invader at the religious and temple level, at the cultural level certain permanent changes took place. There was a fusion of the two cultures. Lyrics in restrained sensuous praise of the beloved harnessed to a very high level of poetic and mystic philosophy, transferred the human to the Divine experience. A further progress of the cult of Radha and Krishna to which the Hindu and Muslim musicians have both been exceptionally partial, is the most outstanding feature of the influence of Khayal. To Hussain Shah Sharqui, is attributed the evolution of the Khayal form in the 15th century.

The cultural synthesis make itself felt in the way a Muslim musician expresses the love of Radha-Krishna. Further examples of the contemporary scene are Ghulam Ali's rendering of *Hari Om*, *Vande Nandkumar* by Ustad Faiyyaz Khan and Karim Naam, *Tero* by Pt. Bhimsen Joshi, etc. The utter devotion of a Hindu discipline to a Muslim guru, the *Guru-shishya* and *Guru*

bandhu relationship are factors which demolish barriers and conventions where music is concerned. The integration of music poetry and painting of the *Rag-ragini* paintings, is another art form representing this fusion. The Krishna-Radha themes have with the passage of time become Indian, not having remained Hindu or Muslim. The Indianness of Khayal, if one may use that expression, comes out best in this synthesis.

To make an observation regarding concerts today, we find varied versions with different emphasis of notes in the rendering of Rags. Though there is much to be said for the freedom of improvisation which Khayal permits, this freedom should not degenerate into license. These should be a continual awareness of the authentic form of the Rag.

There is noticeable, in recent times, a drift towards increasing concern with the mechanical aspects of musicianship. The trend is towards an exhibition of skill rather than bringing forth the spirit of the music. The test therefore is becoming one of technical perfection and musical virtuosity, at the cost of emotional content and creativity. This holds good also for what is happening in the field of craft. A craftsman's work shows magnificent skills and perfection. Yet somehow the art piece appears soulless. This I think, is mainly because

we are moving away from the central theme and essence of our art and craft traditions.

The West on the other hand is becoming increasingly responsive and seem eager to absorb the essential values and the spiritual heritage of the East. This is perhaps to be expected as part of an inscrutable historic process.

The frontiers of musical knowledge just as of all other kinds of knowledge cannot be regarded as permanent at any particular stage. They are always open. It is not possible therefore to foresee what the future trends will be. However, as pointed out by the late Addison Hibbard in a different art field, *i.e.*, literature and Edwin John Strinham, in "Listening to Music creatively"—"The temperament of a land which evolves certain norms and principles of art are not confined to the ages in which they are dominant, but are permanent elements in the psyche of a nation". I feel this is never more true than in the evolution of Khayal gayaki up to the present day and is not likely to be different in its future development. □

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Contribution of Haridasa Koota to Classical Music

—Padma Gurudutt



Padma Gurudutt

The blending of literature and music existed as early as during the period of the vachanakaras (12–13 Century A.D.). This was continued by the Haridasas of “Dasa Koota”.

The foundation for the Haridasa movement was laid by Narahari Teertha, a great scholar, who held a prominent ministerial post in the Kalinga dynasty. He was a staunch devotee of Saint Madhwa-charya. Among the Haridasas the classification of a song into pallavi, anupallavi, charana was first to be seen in his compositions.

Following his footsteps, came great stalwarts of Saint-poets, Sripadaraja, Vyasaraja, Vadiraja who channelised music to convey their thoughts and propounded the right path to realise God. They were masters of Sanskrit, the Vedas, Puranas and Agamas. They fortified the Bhakti movement with beautiful Dasasahitya in chaste Kannada with Keertanas, Suladis, Ugabhogas and

Vruttanamas for community singing. These compositions were so rich in lyrical quality, bhava, laya and philosophy of day-to-day life, that they were very well received both by the connoisseurs as well as the laity.

To explain the great myth and truth of life to the common man these minstrels of Vittala created lyrics in Kannada in musical form for pandits to sing as Bhajans to be later learnt by the people who were not adept in music, but who could imbibe these teachings through them and attain peace in their day-to-day life.

Each Saint-poet/Haridas has a pen name (Ankita). Narahariteertha—*Narahari*, Sripadaraja—*Rangavittala*, Vyasaraja—*Sri/Sirikrishna*, Vadiraja—*Hayavadana*, Kanakadasa—*Adikeshava*, Purandara—*Purandara Vittala*, Vijayadasa—*Vijaya Vittala*, Gopaladasa—*Gopala Vittala* and so on. The 16th century A.D. is considered as the “Golden Era” of the arts. During the reign of the Vijayanagar kings the entire southern peninsula was known as “Karnataka” and hence the music, that was in vogue at that time came to be known as “Carnatic Music”, which included lyrics in all South Indian languages. By that time music had already established itself in the southern region

which helped the popularisation of the Haridasa songs by eminent musicians of the period.

Unfortunately, the impact of foreign invasions unsettled the entire political fabric of India which had its repercussions on the future of Dasa Koota. They were scattered all over the southern region, settled in different areas, consequently their music and literature were influenced by the language, people and the culture of the respective regions.

The songs of Haridasa though dominated by *bhakti* also revel in various techniques of pure classical music. These lyrics are found not only in the ‘Bhattisa Raga’s (32 ragas) that existed before the time of the Dasa Koota, but also several ragas that were in use during their time. To a large extent, they avoided the complex tala structures of the past and popularised the now famous ‘Chapu tala’, which is very easy to be followed by the uninitiated.

The patterns of lyrics are also varied—some have all the three parts of a song (the Pallavi-Anupallavi and the Charana) while some only Pallavi and Charana/Charanas. They generally follow a principle whereby the number of avartas (a set of lines) in the Anupallavi would

Padma Gurudutt is a practitioner of Carnatic classical music and has authored texts of academic worth like the "Lakshana Geethas" and compiles Classical Compositions of Mysore Composers with emphasis on lesser known composers.

be twice the number of the Pallavi, and four times in the Charana. A song with more than one raga is called 'Raga-malika'. Likewise more than one tala is called 'Talamalika'.

Among the songs of Dasa Koota talamalika was used for Sulaadis. These verses of Dasa Koota, because of their literary beauty and musical intent were handed down by word of mouth from generation to generation. Also, the compulsory practice of singing these songs in the temples (Mutts) of the Vaishnavas contributed to the promotion of the Bhajan movement. The credit for this should mainly go to the Saint-poet Sripadaraja who popularised Kannada songs through them. He is remembered first among the Haridasas while conducting any religious discourse.

The practice of Bhajan singing brought great popularity to the Haridasas. They sang and danced with great devotion using tamboora/dandige, chippleas (cymbles), bells tied to the ankles and which attracted listeners to temples. Later Bhajan-singing became popular in the homes too.

In fact, even to this day Haridasa songs are sung during meal-times in the Vaishnava temples. The childhood pranks of 'Lord Krishna' and the immense motherly love of Yashoda have been fully exploited by the Haridasas.

Among the Haridasas, Kanaka and Purandara (disciples of Vyasaraja) are household names in Karnataka. Purandara has been popularly called as incarnation of Narada and his works are known as '*Purandaropanishad*'.

Kanaka and Purandara took music to the houses of the common man folk. It was Purandara who laid the foundations for the beginners in music by composing 'Swaravali', 'Yugma (Janti) Swaravali', 'Alankaras' in druvadi saptatala and also replaced the earlier Khara-harapriya raga by the simpler Mayamalavagowla. He

composed the 'Pillari geetas' in another easy Malahari Raga and several Ugabhogas which resemble closely the Vachanas of Vachanakaras and which are suitable to instinctive singing of the artiste.

Through his songs, he has translated complex philosophy into simple poetry in 'Tamboori meetidava'. A number of ragas are mentioned in the song 'Anganeyarella neredu', the discipline of sabha singing is described in 'Tala beku, takka mela beku' and so on.

Music is an inseparable part of dance. In the song, 'Adidane Ranga' (Arabhi) we see the usage of jatis for dance, couched in different layas. This song has highlighted the prominence of rishabha (Ri) and daivata (Da) in the raga Arabhi. In 'Chandra Chooda Shiva Shankara' (Shankara-bharana) the dominance of kriti (the dominance of musical content over literature) can be seen. A few songs like 'Saddu madali bedavo' and 'Tamboorava kollo' can be likened to Javalis and some like 'Ranga-nyake barano' similar to padas. Some songs like 'Hodi nagari mele kaiyya', 'Dangurava sarirayya' indicate the various percussive instrumental and their rhythm.

Thus Purandaradasa's compositions range from simple beginners' lessons to all forms of songs suitable for concert singing and earned for him the sobriquet "Father of Carnatic Classical Music" (Karnataka Sangeeta Pitamaha). It is to the credit of Purandaradasa that his own



Purandaradasa

guru Vyasaraaja called him 'Dasarendara Purandara-dasarayya'. His songs were commonly sung by many housewives also as part of daily worship, which influenced many eminent composers and musicians. A prominent example is in the influence on Thyagaraja whose mother used to sing them. Thyagaraja has praised Purandara in his work *Prahlada Bhakti Vijaya*.

Vijaya dasa who came after Purandara has also paid growing tributes to Purandara in his songs. *Sangeeta Sampradaya Pradarshini*, a renowned classical work of Subbarama Dikshitar contains three suladis and three keertanas of Purandara with complete notation, which indicate that the dasasahitya

had already reached classical maturity.

Another famous Dasa, Mahipatidasa (Mahipati pen name) composed songs using three languages—Kannada, Marathi and Hindi which very closely resemble the 'Manipravala Kriti' of Muttuswamy Dikshitar, the youngest of the musical Trinity.

Among Karnatak musicians of early 20th Century who have established the method of original rendering of the Haridasas by word of mouth are Karigiri Rao and his disciple Bidaram Krishnappa. This tradition was later continued by Chintalapalli Venkata Rao, B.S. Rajayengar, A. Subba Rao, R.K. Srikantan *et al*

However, during the same period there have also been several examples of Hindustani Musicians using their ragas to render the same songs. Thus Haridasa movement which commenced from 12th Century A.D. has produced eminent scholar dasas whose contributions dominated the social and religious thinking of the people. Their contributions encompass the totality of life, philosophy, God realisation and human values. There is not a single aspect of life that has not been covered by the Dasa Koota. They taught people the easy way of realising God, that is through music. The simplicity of their songs can instantly touch the heart. □

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And then there was Radio!.....

S.N. Sivaswamy

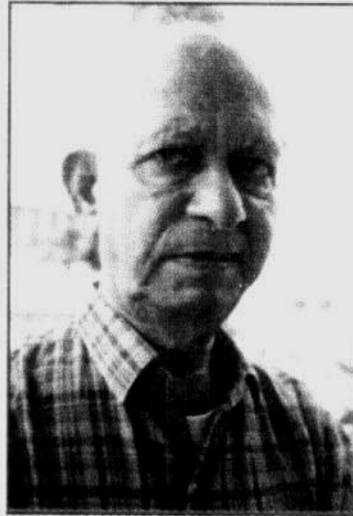
You will be surprised to know that the original concept of the radio had nothing to do with music. Far from it, although perhaps music had waited till the end of the millennium for the arrival of its most exciting conveyor. It was well worth waiting for.

Many many years of scientific research had produced this marvellous means of bringing music into our homes. It was only towards the end of the nineteenth century, when Marconi transmitted and received the first electromagnetic waves; he was successful in the development of a new and revolutionary scientific principle.

Soon, both professional and amateur groups in America and Europe started using wireless telegraphy and radio telephone for various kinds of communication. Eventually radio became a valuable means of military communication and propaganda especially during the First World War. After the war, the first full-time broadcasting station began functioning in the United States under the name of Radio Corporation of America (RCA) and was soon followed by the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) in Great Britain both with the intention of providing entertainment and information to the public. Radio had

come to stay as the most potential and simple means of mass communication.

The staple of any broadcasting station since then has been music, although speech and drama have their own place in the broadcasting systems.



S.N. Sivaswamy

Broadcasting arrived in India in the twenties as amateur establishments called Radio Clubs in Bombay, Madras and Calcutta, followed by the birth of a private firm by name Indian Broadcasting Company. After functioning for three years, this company went into liquidation and the Government of India took over its assets. From these tentative beginnings, All India Radio was formed as a Government department which placed

broadcasting on a regular footing in our country. There were only nine radio stations in undivided India, besides the small transmitters owned and operated by Princely States such as Mysore, Travancore, Hyderabad and Baroda.

The radio in its earlier years was a welcome source of musical fare of the highest order. Even now it serves music throughout the day and night, but being a department sponsored by the Government of a developing country, it is obliged to set apart much of its time to programmes aimed at providing information and education to the people.

Until I joined AIR (in its formative years), my exposure to music was limited to the devotional songs sung by my mother, aunts and other relations, the gramophone machines, and the few concerts in big and small halls that I attended off and on. Sustained listening to music was rare. Radio changed it all.

In my earlier years in broadcasting service, we placed music on top of programme priorities. I recall that at Madras and Tiruchirappalli we had an hour-and-a-half concert every week, an hour's concert on another day, and a Ragam-Tanam-Pallavi programme on yet another day, all given by the finest of musicians.

S.N. Sivaswamy served the mass media in a significant way and retired as Station Director of All India Radio. He has contributed to the field of music in a significant way and has written extensively on salient aspects of music & musicians.

Apart from the great stylistic stalwarts of the earlier decades of this century performing regularly on radio, I became familiar with the genius of many scholars of music of different schools and gharanas, as well as future giants of the music world. In the Ragam-Tanam-Pallavi series, there were some of the best expositions of hitherto

untried ragas. I once heard in this programme the Raga Kannada treated elaborately by 'Tiger' Varadachar, an unforgettable experience. Similarly, in one of his Veena concerts, Karaikkudi Sambasiva Iyer dealt with the raga Natakkuranji in an exhaustive fashion. My memory brings back to me some rare moments like Mudikondan Venkata-

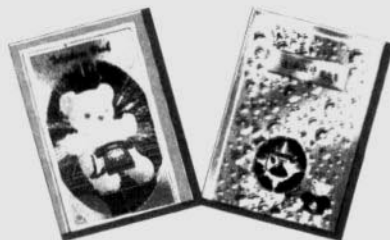
rama Iyer's demonstration of (to me, for the first time), the complex Simhanandana Tala, Thyagaraja's operatic compositions presented in a systematic manner in a series of programmes directed by P. Sambamoorthi, performances by all the prodigies of those days from Manhar Barve to Mali, and the Music-filled radio transmissions of the Annual Madras Music Season and the Thyagaraja Aradhana at Thiruvaiyaru. I remember we used to cancel practically any scheduled programme with impunity and let the choicest excerpts of these Music Festivals ride the air-waves.

□

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.....*And its Impact on Music*

—N.S. Krishnamurthy

If you want to gauge the state of music in a particular area, perhaps the easiest and most reliable way is to listen to the major radio station of that place regularly. Listeners to Bangalore station for instance, would be aware that 'Vainikas' outnumber other instrumentalists. Similarly, if you happen to listen to Trichy, Vijayawada or Cuddappah Stations of AIR, you will find 'Nagaswara' all pervasive. The number of 'A' and 'Top' grade artistes is a sure indication of the richness of musical talent prevalent in that area.

Despite the fact that the percentage of music with respect to the total programme output of AIR network has dwindled over the years, AIR as a mass media continues to occupy a place of pride for promoting and nurturing classical music. AIR can legitimately take credit for bringing classical music to the doorsteps of a common listener interested in music which was

a close preserve of the rich Rajas and Zamindars earlier,

Thanks to the zeal and genuine concern of the policy makers in its early phase of growth, AIR has stressed the importance of guarding the traditional values held sacred in our country, in all its programmes including music.

It was the good fortune of AIR that highly eminent and respected artistes like Semmangudi Srinivasa Iyer, G.N. Balasubramanyam, in the South, Ratan Jankar Sumati Mulatkan in the North were specially inducted into AIR by Dr. B.V. Keskan, Information and Broadcasting Minister, himself a person of good taste and culture. One gets nostalgic recalling the fare offered by AIR in the Tuesday and Friday concerts over the entire southern network featuring the topmost artistes for full seventyfive minutes.

There were special chunk for Ragam, Tanam, Pallavi on Thursdays.

'Those were the days when Radio was still a luxury' reminiscence Bangalore K. Venkataram who along with his guru K. Manjunath would go to a friend's house in Chamarajapet and enjoy music of all time greats, originated from Madras station of AIR. The system introduced by AIR of making payment to artistes according to their grades irrespective whether they are the main artistes or sidemen is praiseworthy, according to Sri Venkataram and worth emulating by Sabhas.

A noteworthy contribution of AIR in encouraging youth artistes is of providing them opportunities on a regular basis. No wonder then, that the primary ambition of any student of music is to appear before the Music Audition Board and obtain as high a gradation as possible.

'I owe a debt of gratitude to AIR' says M.S. Sheela "for the enormous publicity and recognition I got because of my participation in its special programmes which used to be a regular feature of AIR Bangalore those days."

AIR broke new ground in presentation of devotional music. "Bhakti Ranjini" presented by Voleti Venkateshwarulu and Srirangam Gopalaratnam from Vijaya-

N.S. Krishnamurthy served All India Radio as Station Director and retired as Programme Director of AIR, New Delhi. Himself an artiste of calibre, has contributed to the field of Music in a significant way.

wada Station and R.K. Srikantan and M.S. Selvaipillai Iyengar from Bangalore became highly popular with the elite as well as common listeners.

AIR did some pioneering work in the field of orchestration. Stalwarts like Pt. Ravishankar, T.K. Jayarama Iyer, Pannalal Ghosh and Emani Shankara Shastry have produced delectable compositions within the broad framework of Indian melodies, both classical and folk. It is unfortunate that the National Orchestra which was a prestigious unit of AIR has become totally defunct now.

The Weekly (Bi-weekly these days) National programmes of music and the annual Sangeet Sammelan concerts featuring both prominent as well as promising artistes were considered as the most prestigious programmes eagerly looked forward to by connoisseurs of music. Some radical thinking with regard to

the duration and timings of the concert as well as selection of artistes seems to be of urgent necessity since these programmes are fast losing the glamour and respectability they enjoyed earlier.

Today market is flooded with sophisticated gadgets, CDs and cassettes by which you can listen to artistes of your choice and at your convenience. There is unprecedented patronage for music concerts by industrial undertakings and other private agencies. In a situation like this, AIR cannot afford to remain complacent and live on its past glory.

First and foremost the equipment made available to most of the stations which are archaic need to be replaced with modern gadgets. It is frustrating for artistes and irritating to the listeners if the programmes are distorted.

The system of music audition has no doubt stood the test of time. Yet, either because



N.S. Krishnamurthy

of the lenience shown by the members of the jury or due to other compulsions, selection of artistes is not always without blemish. There should be constant monitoring of the quality of performance of the artistes and those found wanting in standard expected of them should be mercilessly weeded out.

Srushti (ಸೃಷ್ಟಿ), Sthithi (ಸ್ಥಿತಿ) and Laya (ಲಯ) should be the guiding factors for All India Radio to save the aspirations of the people who are its real masters.

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Indian Music in US

Dr. M.S. Nataraja, U.S.A

Nadatarangini, a well-known organization of the Washington DC metropolitan area dedicated to the preservation and propagation of classical Karnatic music, conducted its annual music festival at the Sri Siva Vishnu Temple on April 24 and 25, 1999. More than 150 Individual singers paid tribute to saint Purandara Dasa, the Karnataka-Sangeetha-Pithamaha and Saint Thyagaraja by rendering their compositions with great devotion and enthusiasm.

Singers came from far and near (some drove or flew hundreds of miles) just to avail of the opportunity to sing and hundreds came just to listen. Talented signers as young as five and many in their silver and goldenages contributed to the overall success of the festival. Satyaraj who is visiting from Bangalore, noted in his valedictory address that Nadatarangini which made a humble beginning some fifteen years ago in Columbus, Ohio, has grown into a gigantic institution touching the hearts of innumerable music lovers under the loving care of and because of the hard work of Usha Char and her supportive husband A.R. Char.

The first segment of the festivities started early on the 24th morning with the worship of Lord Rama and singing by

elementary students. The morning segment culminated with the synchronous rendering of the traditional pancha-rathna Kruthis (the five gems among the compositions of Thyagaraja) and selected devaranamas (songs in praise of the Lord) of saint Purandara Dasa by a group of singers and accompanists that not only filled the stage but overflowed out of it! With the able contribution by top local-area-musicians supported by their senior students along with numerous visiting artistes, melodious music reverberated and enthralled the audience many of whom felt compelled to sing along!

The afternoon segment consisted of individual singing and ended with mini-concerts showed great potential for enhancing the growth of quality and quantity of local talent. Raghavendra Batni's Poorvi-kalyani and Satya Bhooshan's Bhairavi provided flashes for hope of the future. Madhuru Sathyaraj, visiting from India, rendered Purandara Dasa kritis with devotion. There were many

well-trained individual singers and it is really hard to name them all, but it appears that a day will soon come when there may be minimum standards set and auditions conducted for determining eligibility for participation in the festival!

The concluding event for the evening was a grand veena duet by Revathi Murthy and Pushpa Kashinath (both visiting artistes from Bangalore), accompanied by Radhika Mani on the violin and Anoor Dattatreya Sharma, also a visiting artiste from Bangalore, on the Mrudangam. A single veena is enough to steal the hearts of music lovers, but two veenas together, played in perfect harmony kept the audience spellbound!

After a meticulous rendition of the ragamalika varnam (valachi, starting with kedara) and paying obeisance to Lord Ganapathi in the raga Shanmukhapriya (Deekshitar's composition, Siddhi-Vinayakam), the veena players quickly established a rapport with each other and with the audience. Then were very well-coordinated, complementary to

The foregoing coverage of a series of musical events in America gives an interesting deep into the growing influence of Indian music in that country. The writer is a US-based Indian connoisseur.

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each other, and superbly synchronized in creating a feeling as if there was only one player (with four hands!). This is even more praise-worthy considering the fact that these two artistes have not played together before.

The centre piece of the concert was a detailed rendition of Kamboji followed by the popular kruthi, Evarimata, which ended in a masterly swara-prasthara which was responded to mutually between the two veena players and equally effectively by Radhika on the violin. The thani avarthanam by Anoor Dattatreya Sharma was indeed a treat. Ragam-thanam-pallavi in Simhendramadhyama was a delightful part of the concert, the effectiveness of which was doubled because of the two different nadas of the two veenas which sounded distinctly different, as if one was a male and the other a female! To add to this richness, there was appropriately complementary violinist and percussionist who effortlessly matched all the complex laya patterns posed by the veena players. The melodious composition of Muthiah Bhagavathar in Niroshtha played in the beginning of the concert and Veene Sheshanna's thillana in Behag played at the conclusion were thoroughly enjoyed by the thrilled audience.

It may be appropriate to mention here about the uniqueness of the raga Niroshtha and the context of the composition itself. The raga is

devoid of the swaras 'Ma' and 'Pa' and the sahitya avoids all oshtavya sounds that require the singer to close the lips and thus make it possible for a singer to sing without completely closing the mouth. The story goes that Nalvadi Krishna Raja Wodeyar, the king of Mysore was in his death-bed and special worships were going on in the temples throughout the country seeking the king's recovery. Muthiah Bhagavathar who was deeply indebted to the king for all the support and encouragement the king had given him, spontaneously composed this new raga and the song "raja-raja-radhithe" in praise of Sharada-Devi—the ishta-devatha of the Mysore kings—symbolizing the devotion of the composer. "Oh, Devi who is worshiped by the king of kings, you are the only one who can save our dear Krishna Raja, I beg you with an open mouth!

The second day consisted of more individual singers and several group performances. The special feature of this year's group renditions was the classification of the program by certain attributes of the raga groups. D.K. Nagarajan's group rendered compositions in Sampoorna ragas (ragas consisting of all the seven swaras) while Usha Char's group rendered kruthis in Shadava (ragas consisting of six of the seven notes). Nirmala Ramaswamy's group presented oudava ragas (ragas missing two of the seven notes) while Jayamangala troop sang the vakra ragas (tunes which use

swara patterns other than a monotonic sequence to provide uniquely recognizable characteristics to a raga).

And finally, Maragatham Ramaswamy's group elucidated compositions in Bhashanga ragas (ragas which borrow one or two and occasionally three swaras from outside their natural parent ragas in order to add special beauty). Balakrishnan who was the master of ceremonies for this segment did an excellent job of explaining in simple terms the significance of understanding the grammar of Karnatic music which enhances one's ability to appreciate the nuances of the art. Such special musical presentations which are regularly produced by the local area teachers are worthy of special recognition and they certainly go a long way in uplifting the listeners in several ways.

Two mini-concerts that followed, deserve special mention, one by Radha Kalyan and the other by young Prithvi Mohan. Radha sang some rare ragas like Jhankara-dhwani and Sharath-chandrika. Prithvi, at such a young age, shows promise and seems to have the potential for reaching heights. His rendition of Malayamarutha along with a matching young violinist, Arun Ramamurthy was appreciated by one and all.

The grand finale of the two-day festival was a scintillating vocal concert by the visiting artiste Bangalore V. Kalavathy accompanied by Sandhya

Srinath on the violin, Anoor Dattatreya Sharma on the mridangam and Sudheendra Rao on the khanjira. It was a total concert and a truly satisfying one. Kalavathi started with a crisp varnam in kalyani and gave her salutations to Lord Rama in Nata (Jaya-Jaya) by which time she had already established herself with great élan. She presented Sarasa-Sama-Dana (Kapi-narayani) and went on to develop Poorvikalyani in some detail. After a very effective presentation of the kruthi Paripoorna Kama, she took up the central piece—an in-depth rendition of Thodi. Her alapana left no aspect of the raga undiscovered, using her rich voice blessed with a very comfortable range while demonstrating her abilities in the neraval of the unforgettable line “niddurea-niraakaranchi-muddugathamboora-patti” of the famous Thyagaraja composition “Kadanu-variki-kaddu” and scholarly swara-kalpana-prayogas. Of course, the musical beauty was truly

multiplied because of the able accompaniments. Sandhya was a perfect match and responded to each and every challenge in an equally scholarly fashion. The percussion duo—Anoor and Rao were in complete form, they not only played the instruments, it appeared like they were playing with the instruments, mutually enjoying each other's contribution with completely genuine admiration and respect and complete involvement, thereby making their thani avarthanam a feast for the ears! All the important nades were demonstrated with rhythmic precision.

What made the concert totally satisfying was the short but sweet ragam—thanampallavi in Kalyani. The introduction of Kanada, Behag and Madhyamavathi swara kalpana blended very smoothly without any apparent contradictions and made the RTP quite memorable. Bala Murali's thillana in Behag was a good choice to end the concert

with that left the audience in a very lively and jovial mood.

Literally, hundreds of volunteers contributed to the success of the festival including those talented singers and culinary specialists who satisfied the unlimited appetite of the hungry listeners. The atmosphere of the auditorium was enhanced by the creative and heavenly decorations done by Raghavendra Batni and his troop. As Mr. Satyaraj pointed out, Nadatarangini has come a long way and established itself firmly in the hearts of the connoisseurs of Washington DC metropolitan area. It certainly has the potential to positively influence other similar cultural organizations elsewhere.

Nadatarangini

Nadatarangini, a registered non-profit cultural organization dedicated to the propagation of Classical Music in the U.S.A. was started 15 years back in Columbus, Ohio. Now it has its roots both in Washington Metropolitan area and in Ohio.

It has organized several music programs in addition to its annual “Purandara Dasa and Thyagaraja Music Festival”. It is very encouraging to see that more than 150 people are performing during the twelfth annual festival. All programs are free and supported by generous contributions and volunteer support from the public. We look forward to their extended support in the future.

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(Contd. from P. 16)

Chidambara Tambiran, who was the chief in the local branch of the Dharmapuram Mutt. Tambiran wanted to make Arunachalam live in Seerkazhi, so that both could meet everyday. After Arunachalam left for Pondicherry, Tambiran arranged a big house for his friend and sent word to Tillayadi, asking Kavirayar's wife to go over to Seerkazhi, where her husband was awaiting her arrival. When Kavirayar returned from Pondicherry, Chidambara Tambiran, keeping the matter in suspense, took him to the new house. Kavirayar was awe struck, when he found his wife there. Unable to decline the request of Tambiran, Arunachala Kavirayar settled down in Seerkazhi and lived there till the end of his life. There he composed 'Seerkazhi Sthala Puranam', 'Seerkazhikkovai', 'Ajomukhi Natakam' and many more.

Venkatarama Iyer and Kodandarama Iyer, two young

musicians of Sattanathapuram, a suburb of Seerkazhi came to Arunachala Kavirayar to study Prabandhas and Kamba Ramayana, under him. It was only on their suggestion, Kavirayar composed his magnum opus 'Rama Nataka Keertanaigal', later popularised by the devoted disciples. Kavirayar was 60, at the time of this composition.

Kavirayar wanted to present this opera in the shrine of Lord Ranganatha at Srirangam. The temple authorities said that he could do so, if only the Lord permitted. Kavirayar sung, in praise of the deity, the popular keertana, 'En Palli Kondeer'. At the behest of the Lord, the temple officials felt happy to arrange for the premiere.

Next Arunachala Kavirayar wished to present this opera in the presence of King Tulaja II of Tanjavur, but the fort, at that time, was under the invasion of Nawab Madermulik. So, Kavirayar went to Pondicherry and met

Anandaranga Pillai. Pillai felt it would not be fit for him to listen to 'Rama Natakam', before it was given an audience by his friend, Tulaja. But he gave a lot of presents to Kavirayar and also a letter to Manali Muthukrishna Mudaliar. Mudaliar felt glad on listening to the opera, showered presents on him with the honorific, 'Ramayana Kavijnar' (Poet of Ramayana).

Kavirayar's ambition was later fulfilled when he got the opportunity to present 'Rama Natakam' in the august presence of King Tulaja.

Arunachala Kavirayar had three sons and the eldest, Ambalavana, also became a great poet. During his life at Seerkazhi, it is said, Arunachala Kavirayar and Tillaividangam Marimutha Pillai became good friends.

Arunachala Kavirayar passed away in 1779 A.D., at the age of 72.

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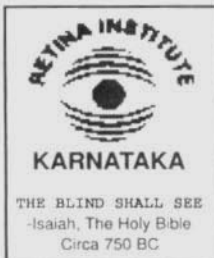
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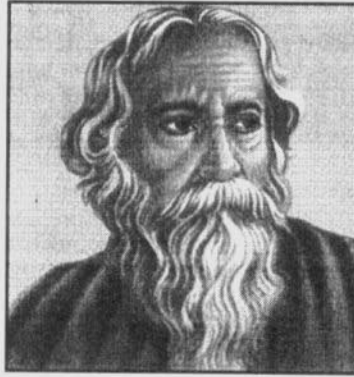
language Maithili, of Mithila, the land of Janaka-Sita. But Bengal also claims him as its own. Critics condemned his songs as obscene, but his admirers extolled him. The people of Mithila loved to sing his songs.

Chandi Das was another Vaishnava poet of the 14th century. His "*Sri Krishna Kirtana*" reveals the path of Vaishnava Sahajiya. Krishna is his supreme Reality and Radha is his Shakti.

The followers of Sri Gauranga (1485-1533 A.D.) sang profusely of devotion to Radha-Krishna, though Sri Gauranga did not compose any songs.

But the greatest songs of Bengal are from the Shakti cult. Rama Prasad (1723-75) was a child of Kali and he inspired Sri Ramakrishna, the child of Bhava Tarini of Dakshineswar. Kamalakanta (born 1772 A.D., date of death uncertain) was another great influence on Sri Ramakrishna. He used their songs while worshipping Kali and used them while speaking of spiritual sadhana.

In one song, Rama Prasad says, "Dive deep, O mind, into your heart-ocean, taking the name of Kali." His relationship with Kali is intimate like that of a child with its mother. He admonishes Kali—"You cannot frighten me by making your eyes red, I am not a baby born in its eighth month. My treasure is your red feet, which



Rabindranath Tagore

Siva holds in his lotus heart....".

Kamalakunta describes the Mother—"Kali, full of Bliss, dear to Maha Kala Siva, you dance in happiness, singing to yourself, clapping your hands in time.... You are the engineer, we move because of your actions, we work as you make us work, we speak as you make us speak...."

The tradition of Kali songs was continued by some swamis of Ramakrishna Order, like Swami Chandikananda (1893-1983) and other devotees of Ramakrishna like Premik and Sadhaks (pen-names). The songs of the latter two are sung in Dhrupad style and are called Kali Kirtan.

In modern Bengali. Rabindranath Tagore and Kazi Nazrul Islam have contributed their own types of songs. The devotional songs of Bengal have inspired thousands of devotees in their path of spiritual progress.

Assam

The Bhakti Tradition of Assam, originally directed to

Siva-Sakti worship, was given a new direction towards Vaishnava Traditions by the great saints Shankara Deva (1449-1569 A.D.) and his nephew Madhava Deva. They spread the Vaishnava cult throughout Assam by a mass movement through Nam Ghars, which are temples of the Name, built in every village of Assam. The movement put a new life into Assam and reformed the society. Shankara Deva's songs are sung even today. Madhava Deva also composed many songs and succeeded his uncle. This movement liberated the women of Assam from their traditional backwardness and inhibitions.

Telugu Songs

The dominance of Thyagaraja (1767-1847) over Karnataka music is total. He built a wonderful musical "Rama Bhakti Samrajya" and presided over it. His pre-eminence is such that in a textbook of Karnataka music, in Kannada, by B. Venkatakrisnappa, out of 107 kirtanas given for study, 72 are from Thyagaraja and the rest are from 13 composers like Patnam Subramanya Iyer, Muthuswami Dikshitar, Shyama Shastry and others.

It is interesting to note that though Telugu was not their mother-tongue, most of the later composers like Vasudevachar studied Telugu and composed their songs in that alien tongue—such is the influence of Thyagayya; who composed some 600 kirtanas in



various degrees of complexity, from the simple utsava sampradaya kirtanas to the classic 'Ghanaraga' Pancharatna Kritis. In content, selection of ragas and bhava, Thyagaraja projects a spectrum of variety. Many songs are addressed to his mind, admonishing it, through it, he teaches us. Many songs are replete with devotion to Rama, who to Tyagaraja, is a living, eternal presence. Then there are other songs which move over from the personal to the advaitic domain—like "Pari palaya Raghunatha", in Reetigoula, in which Thyagaraja does mental worship with no articles of puja.

The first composer who gave us regular songs in Telugu is Tallapaka Annamacharya (1408–1503) who worshipped at the Tirupati temple. 14,358 of his songs have been unearthed, but we do not know the exact nature of the music of the kritis.

Kshetrappa, who came later in the 16th century, is the master of padas, which do have a pallavi, but no anupallavi and have a few charanas. They have an ankita at the end. Kritis are more evolved and have more

cultured poetry in them.

Narayana Teertha wrote his *Sri Krishna Leela Tarangini* in Sanskrit and his songs are very popular in bhajan groups.

Bhadrachala Rama Das (1620–80) who followed Narayana Teertha renovated the Rama Temple in Bhadrachala. He suffered a lot in his life and found solace in singing to his Rama. In his songs, he praises Rama but sometimes quarrels with him, too. He appeals to mother Sita to intercede on his behalf with her husband "Ramachandrudu na pai chalamu jesinnadu/Sitamma chappavamma". His songs became a model for Tyagaraja to follow.

Thyagayya's time saw Karnataka music reach its pinnacle of glory, with the trinity of Thyagayya, Dikshitar and Shyama Shastri in full bloom at the same time. Shyama shastri also wrote in Telugu.

Another contemporary of theirs was Maharaja Swati Tirunal of Tiruvananthapuram, who wrote in many languages.

Telugu is the lingua Franca of Karnataka music, thanks to Thyagayya's influence. It is an

interesting fact that the Trinity of Karnataka Music all lived on the banks of Kavery in a village in Tanjore District of Tamil Nadu.

Tamil Songs.

Devotional songs in Tamil were current even before this millennium. In 10th century A.D., Nathamuni collected the *Nalayira Divya Prabandhas* (4000 divine writings) of the Alwars. Later Nambiandar Nambi collected the Saiva compositions—the Tevaram and Tiruvachakam of the Nayanmars, Kulasekhara Alwar and Cheraman Perumal Nayanar, though from Kerala form part and parcel of this twin tradition. Tirunilakantha Yalpanar carried the yal and sang the compositions of Tirujnana Sambandhar. Appar and Sundarar are also famous for their poetry.

Though these poems are used in temples even today, the poems do not have the structure of a pada or kirtana.

It was Arunagiri Nathar, in 16th century, who gave the first Tamil songs with a raga-tala structure, in his "Tiruppugal". These songs have a variety of talas which delight percussionists. "Nada Vinda Kaladi

Namo Namo" is a famous song from this collection.

Arunachala Kavi Rayar, in 18th century, gave the Rama Nataka Kirtanai.

Shyama Shastry and Maha Vaidyanatha Iyer (1844-92) have also composed some Tamil songs, as did Muthiah Bhagavathar (1877-1945). The latter composed many Kannada songs on Chamundi during his stay in the Mysore Maharaja's Court.

Gopalakrishna Bharati (1810-96) is famous for his opera "Nandanar Charitram".

Saint Ramalinga (1823-1874) is the author of the famous "Nathar Mudi Melirukkum Nalla Pambe".

Yogi Shuddhananda Bharati wrote the popular song "Jhankar Sruti saiguvom."

Papanasam Sivan has many songs to his credit, I had the privilege of hearing him in the Mylapore Kapali Temple. Oottukkadu Venkata Subbier was another prolific composer who was with us till recently.

Conclusion

Thus flowed the river of devotion across India during the millennium. It was very much there in the beginning, though thin. It acquired a body and momentum during the middle of the millennium in the 14th to 17th century A.D. It has not disappeared completely even now.

In this study, there are some gaps, which are due to the inadequacies of the author and the scantiness of the literature. I have not touched upon Sufi music, their quawwali and ghazal and other songs. Even the materialistic Ghalib has a few devotional songs to his credit—but I am totally ignorant of this literature, as of the Sufiana Kalam of Kashmir.

It has not been possible to mention all the composers whose work is known to one—due to paucity of space. Nothing short of a big volume can do justice to such a subject. But it has been a pleasure to put together this article. □

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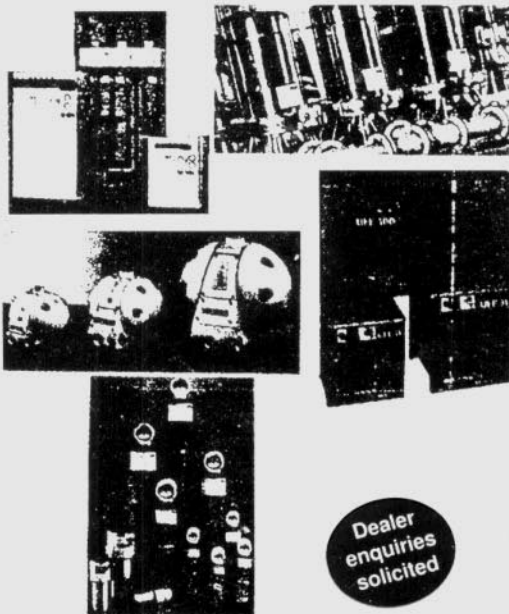
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May their Tribe Thrive!